

# Disability Now



## VAT concessions on building alterations don't go far enough

Improvements to private homes or charity buildings for handicapped people will, after all, be exempt from VAT.

However, building alterations and extensions carried out by other organisations will still be eligible for the new 15 per cent VAT announced in the Budget.

News of the concession came in a letter from Barney Hayhoe MP, Minister of State at the Treasury, to Tim Yeo MP, Chairman of the Charities VAT Reform Group on 29 March. It was supported by a Treasury announcement.

Barney Hayhoe was replying to a letter sent by the CVRG – 300 charities led by The Spastics Society – which pointed out that charities cannot usually afford new buildings and would have to spend more money on renovations. The Spastics Society estimated that it would be paying an extra £120,000 on its £650,000 VAT bill for 1984/85.

The Government's concession means that services supplied to individuals or to a charity which improve access – such as ramps, wider doors or passages, or lift installations – will be zero-rated; so will first time installations of ground-floor

bathrooms, washrooms or lavatories in private homes.

The relief will not, however, maintain the pre-Budget position for handicapped people or charities since many types of building work are now excluded. "Having considered the matter extremely carefully, we really do not think that a wider relief preserving the exact pre-Budget position would be justified," said Barney Hayhoe.

For other organisations or businesses who might have considered making their premises more accessible, 15 per cent VAT will be seen as a disincentive.

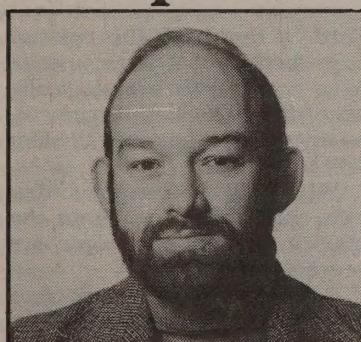
In view of the fact that an Access Committee for England funded by the Department of Health and Social Services has just been launched, and the Prince of Wales' Advisory Group on Disability is promoting easier access to buildings, this seems a particularly inappropriate time and place to extend VAT.

On the broader issue of making charities exempt from VAT altogether, Barney Hayhoe awaits "with interest" the result of the CVRGs research into the potential number of claimants and the revenue cost.

Month in Parliament, page 3

## Executive Council reverses decision

## Beech Tree goes independent



Malcolm Jones

Beech Tree, the pioneering unit for children with severe behavioural problems, will no longer be tied to the apron strings of Meldreth Manor, The Society's school in Hertfordshire. It is to be independent.

The Executive Council ratified the plan at its meeting on 27 March.

Malcolm Jones, founder of the Beech Tree concept, and head of the unit since it opened in 1977, will remain in overall control, dividing his time between Beech Tree and the new unit in Lancashire, due to open next January.

"I'm extremely happy the way things have gone," he says. "It looks as if we are going to have a Beech Tree in the north exactly as we wanted it—purpose built for 2 groups of 7 children, extremely well staffed and equipped, serving older children as well. And in the South, although we've had to reduce the number of children from 9 to 7 to meet DES regulations, we have The Society's undertaking that it will look for an alternative and, hopefully, bigger building."

The Executive Council was persuaded to change its mind by John Cox. Having visited a subnormality hospital, and watched *Silent Minority*, he saw at Beech Tree the results that can be obtained from behavioural methods, democratic staff man-

agement and close relationships with parents – all Beech Tree hallmarks.

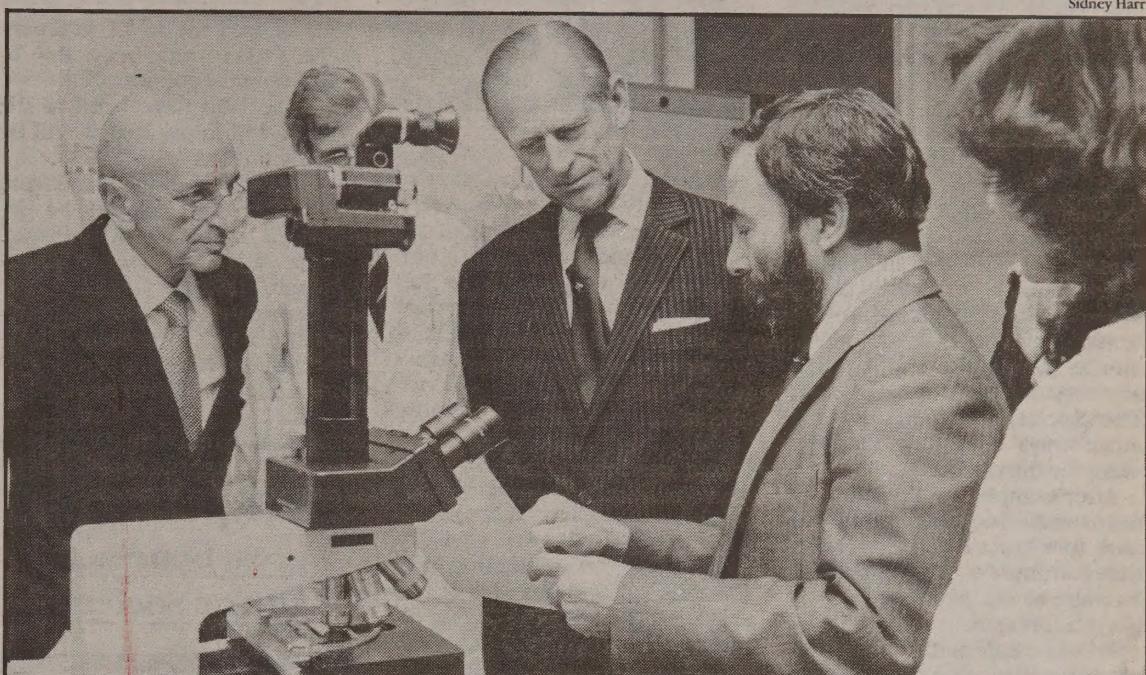
"To have achieved success with 24 out of 27 children speaks for itself," he said.

Malcolm Jones plans to run the two units in tandem with joint staff training and monthly visits by staff between the units.

He does not see them continuing indefinitely.

"I would like to see the Beech Trees in perhaps ten years' time changing their function, because local authorities should be setting up services to cater for this sort of child at a young age in his home locality." So far one local authority has expressed interest.

"We are developing a model of how these children can be helped, and the important thing is to spread the information we have to other organisations."



Royal visitor to the Paediatric Research Unit at Guy's Hospital. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh hears about new research into the causes of disability from Professor Paul Polani, left, and Professor Martin Bobrow. He was visiting the Prince Philip Research Laboratories and attending a reception. A Trust Fund of which The Spastics Society is Trustee has secured promises of £2 million.

Story and pictures page 8.

## Disability Now

and



In this issue of *Disability Now* we celebrate a new relationship with Cerebral Palsy Overseas.

Since last September, when CPO officially started work, it has continued to build up worldwide contacts in the field of cerebral palsy and to develop plans for helping severely disabled people in developing countries.

Derek Lancaster-Gaye, Director of CPO, at first planned to start a bulletin of his own. But since *Disability Now* is expanding both in size and coverage, it seemed more appropriate for CPO to join forces with the newspaper.

From this issue, CPO will have its own news and feature pages.

We hope this will produce a more interesting newspaper.

## Entente Cordiale

Closer links were forged last month between The Spastics Society and the Scottish Council for Spastics when Mrs Joyce Smith, John Cox and John Belcher met George Pollock, Chairman of the Scottish Council and Commander Archie Cameron, its Director, in Edinburgh. Afterwards, John Cox called the informal meeting "friendly" and "constructive."

Commander Cameron agreed. "There should be good co-operation between the sister organisations, and every effort – while observing the autonomies – is welcome," he said.

He was also pleased about the close liaison that now exists between the Appeals Section of The Society's North East Region, and the Scottish Council.

Other points agreed were that the preliminary papers prepared last year by The Society's Shops and Social Services divisions should be re-written to portray more faithfully the requirements of the Scottish Council, and that the Council will send representatives to the Regional Orga-

nisation Conference at Castle Priory this month.

The new *entente* was personal as well as official, for John Cox and Archie Cameron are old friends. They both served on the cruiser, HMS Sheffield, between 1951 and 1952, John as a sub-lieutenant and Archie Cameron as lieutenant-commander.

"I used to bully him," said Archie Cameron cheerfully.

"He still does!" said John.

## INSIDE

The Chairman.....	2
Letters to the Editor .....	2
Reports.....	3
Month in Parliament .....	3
The flaws of YTS .....	5
Castle Priory .....	5
Cerebral Palsy Overseas ...	6-7
Michael Stopford's party... 8-9	8-9
Coping in the kitchen(2) ...10	10
Local Group news .....	11
Outlook.....	12
Young Outlook.....	13
Margaret Morgan .....	14
What's on.....	14



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## THE CHAIRMAN

### "We must adapt to economic and social change"

Like other organisations, The Spastics Society needs to adapt continually to economic and social change. That is why *Spastics News* has become *Disability Now* and why a change in the name of The Society is being considered.

It is important to identify the need for such changes and use our experience to reach people who might offer advice, encouragement and guidance for the future. With this in mind, I am working towards establishing a committee of representatives from industry, commerce, education and careers advisory services which, with The Society's help, could explore ways of finding employment for the disabled.

After completing their education, the disabled must be able to look forward to useful work in the community and a greater measure of independence than is likely at present.

To some extent the lack of employment opportunities is due to high unemployment generally. But potential employers also lack understanding of what disabled people can do for themselves.

The Society is well placed to clear up such misconceptions and provide opportunities for young people to prove that, despite their disability, there is a real future for them as part of the community.

### What can be done

Striking evidence of what can be done is seen in the Douglas Arter Centre in Salisbury, where young adults with severe physical and mental handicaps are given the confidence to use their latent abilities to the full. Before the Centre was opened, the future for them was bleak. Many faced the prospect of becoming institutionalised and eventually isolated when their immediate relatives were no longer around to show that the "outside world" was there and cared about them.

We need more centres like Douglas Arter.



Mrs Joyce Smith

When I became Chairman of The Society in 1980, there was a need to broaden the scope of our activities and speed up communication. I established a Regions Committee composed of regional chairmen with the aim of pooling knowledge, requirements and expertise for wider communal use. This is now working so smoothly that I plan to relinquish my Chairmanship of that Committee in October.

Recently, the Executive Council has created two advisory committees for marketing and fundraising, and for the social services. The first meetings took place at the end of March.

Inevitably, much of The Society's work is administrative. But it is also a medium of communication between those who know about cerebral palsy and those who only have preconceptions about it.

### Opportunity

In order to work effectively, The Society must be aware of what is happening in the world outside and take every opportunity to integrate its work.

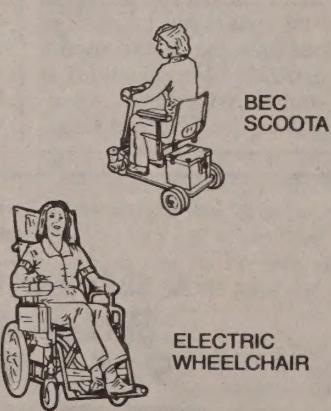
For this reason I welcome Cerebral Palsy Overseas to the pages of *Disability Now*. By collaboration, I am convinced that we can move towards fostering a better understanding of what disability means and, equally important, what it does not mean.

The inclusion of CPO in *Disability Now* expands our readership abroad through the organisation's contacts. Also, we shall see how, by cooperation and communication, something more fundamental can be achieved – that of reaching, meeting and influencing those who might help us all.

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## Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

### School re-union?

I am sure most people know that Wilfred Pickles School is closing down this summer.

I was at Pickles for 4½ years and they were very happy ones.

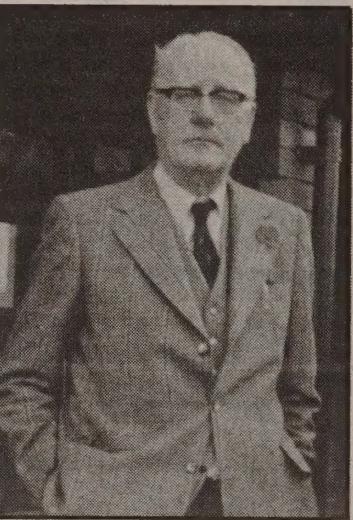
I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Padder and all the staff, for they helped me to be independent. I have since been able to carry on with confidence.

Those who have been at the school will know that it will be greatly missed.

If anyone who was there from 1970 to 1974 would be interested in having a re-union, please write to me. If I get enough response I will arrange something.

Julie Jezard,  
21 Salisbury Avenue,  
Harpden,  
Herts.

### Douglas Arter a great benefactor to The Society



The death of Douglas Arter in Weston-super-Mare on 6 March has deprived The Spastics Society of one of its most long-standing friends and devoted fundraisers.

Over many years Mr Arter worked with remarkable success to raise money for cerebral palsied people.

Douglas Arter was a modest, quiet but dedicated worker who was not afraid of controversy when it allowed him to further his fundraising activities.

He helped to launch the highly successful football pool scheme in 1957. At its peak, the pool had between 4 and 5 million members, about 20 per cent of all the households in the country, and it provided the funding for most of The Society's activities through to the early 1970s.

It is no exaggeration to say that Mr Arter led one of the most successful fundraising teams there has ever been, which has contributed a total of £36 million to The Society.

The Douglas Arter Centre, named after him, was opened in 1978. As a pioneering centre, it has provided much needed facilities in Wiltshire for young adults with severe physical and mental handicaps who would otherwise have found themselves in long-stay hospitals.

In expressing our sympathy to Douglas Arter's widow and family, The Society adds its gratitude.

He was a remarkable man – one who saw nothing remarkable in doing good for others and who never sought public recognition for what he achieved.

Joyce Smith

### I was honest!

In response to the letter from Mrs Anderson (February issue), my contribution in *A Shift of Emphasis* was honest and based on my own experience and perceptions, developed over a long personal involvement with The Spastics Society at group and regional level.

The film sequence at the North West Regional Committee showed Mrs Anderson expressing her real fears about the development of a consumer voice within The Society and in particular in the N.W. Region.

The consumer voice will become more marked as existing consumer groups grow and new groups develop.

The North West Region is an enlightened region and this is one reason why the consumer group is so strong there. We are all individuals and our views often differ, but for all that we are friendly as a group and a region.

I believe that The Spastics Society will benefit from more open debate and dialogue with everyone concerned, and that consumer involvement is a step in the right direction.

Sharon Hughes,  
Chairperson, N.W. Consumer Group,  
6 Epworth Grove,  
Lynton Road Estate,  
Bolton, Lancs.

### Different perceptions

It is not easy to reply to Ruth Anderson's letter (February), firstly because I am accused of twisting the truth and secondly because, as I am not a parent of a handicapped child I have not had the experience of years of anxiety, years of fighting for better services, years of coping with the feeling that because of my child I'm different from other people.

Yet a reply is needed. I have been making films for many years and I am perfectly aware that many films do indeed place statements out of context. In *A Shift of Emphasis* this has not happened. The sequence is quite long and runs chronologically according to the basic argument, as anyone who has seen the film will recognise.

What is clear, however, is that two opposing views about the ability of disabled people are presented.

Ruth Anderson's view is clear ... where more vulnerable (i.e. mentally handicapped) spastic people are concerned, they need the guidance of their families and friends, and a protective environment.

Sharon Hughes' view is more robust ... we must let the more disabled spastic adult into the decision making process where it concerns their lives and their future, however inconvenient this may be to the smooth running of The Society at local, regional or national level.

These views are both sincerely held and, as Sharon points out in the film, based on different perceptions. It is how these perceptions are reconciled that is central to the future direction of The Spastics Society.

Nigel Evans,  
143 Elgin Crescent  
London W.11

### Integration, gradually

I read with interest Anna Hiam's summing up of the meeting about the 1981 Education Act at

Cardiff (February).

I hope that no-one supposes that an ordinary school is always best for the child with special needs. Neither Warnock nor the White Paper suggested that this was so – in fact both indicated that there would always be a need for some form of special provision. As David Argent's letter indicated, there is concern about integration particularly if the resources are not adequate.

It would appear that the persons representing the view expressed by Anna Hiam have not really understood any of the recent writings on the subject of integration (Warnock, White Paper and Education Act); neither are they cognisant of the views of practitioners.

As a practitioner, I would say that it will be a very long time before integration is effected for those deemed in special need who are already within the mainstream, never mind those who are outside it.

Integration for those in the special sector will only be brought about gradually and then integration will only be effective when the resources offered are adequate.

Peter Knight,  
Cedar House,  
Dene Park,  
Shipbourne Road,  
Tonbridge, Kent.

### No, Mr Argent!

I have studied very carefully the three pieces about the integration of children with special needs into mainstream education (*Spastics News* September, October and February).

As an ex-teacher, I can, of course, understand the concern of Mr Argent about admitting disabled children "without adequate resourcing and physical adaptations to buildings", and I was very glad to read that the National Association of Schoolmasters / Union of Women Teachers is "certainly not opposed to the inclusion of the handicapped in mainstream education."

But the first and last paragraph in his letter re-affirm, for me, the shortsightedness of the able-bodied members of society – whether teachers or not – to the fundamental issue of integration.

How can integration come about, Mr Argent, without changing the attitude of the able-bodied to the disabled? And doesn't it begin in childhood?

I am the parent of a disabled son. The arguments used by Mr Argent were given to me over 30 years ago and repeated frequently during my son's 38 years.

The Spastics Society is doing wonderful pioneering work in tackling this subject and I must remind the teachers' unions that there is a limit to the patience of disabled people and their parents.

We have waited too long already for the so-called educational experts to take on "this additional burden" (the words used by the NAS/UWT).

I support wholeheartedly Mark Vaughan's work.

Perhaps Mr Argent needs reminding also that The Spastics Society cares for that section of the disabled population at the bottom of the "pecking order."

If he is "no longer prepared to support a society which is so critical of the professional association" to which he belongs, then I suggest that his "blinkers" have clouded his judgement and turned his priorities upside down.

Hilda S. Davies  
22 Pine Tree Avenue,  
Noctorum,  
Birkenhead, Merseyside

# REPORTS

## North West Regional Conference

### The chain is only as strong as its links - says Director

This year's conference took place on 24 March at Owens Park, Manchester. Of 200 people, about 50 came from local authorities and social services departments. There were representatives from 18 groups as well as Society staff.

Mrs Joan Williams, the regional Chairman, welcomed everyone and then introduced the Director, Sir John Cox. Although this was his second visit to the

look at communication, both inside and outside The Society. He himself is aiming to change the "we" and "they" attitudes to "us".

"My disability is ignorance" he said.

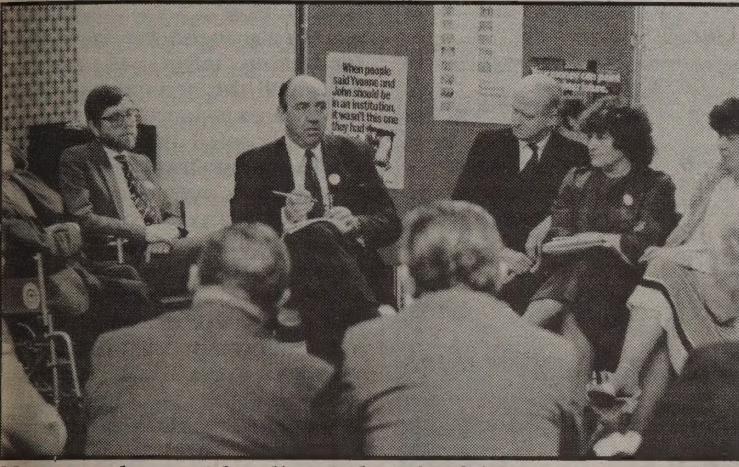
We must all work to get the right work, home, leisure and participation in Society affairs for each cerebral palsied person.

It came across very strongly that John intends to travel and meet people and not just sit in an office.

After his speech he was joined on the platform by John Belcher, Betty Adams and Ann Hithersay for an "Any questions?" session. Although this was interesting, I felt that we did not use the expertise of the panel as widely as we could have done.

We then divided into eight discussion groups which ranged over the Director's role, the role of the Social Services and Education departments, Welfare, Rights to Employment, Trans-

Lawrence Englesberg



Many people wanted to discuss the role of the Director.

region it was his first opportunity to meet us.

He started by telling us about himself, and then went on to talk about The Society and his role in it.

He said there was much to be thankful for in the last 33 years, particularly the parents who had started The Society. But as parents have to change to keep up with their children, so we should be thinking ahead about how we can and should change. The objectives set for 1984 were a beginning, but we should be planning ten years ahead and translating that into the budget. He believed we all need to

port, Living options, and Profound Mental Handicap.

After a good lunch we repeated the morning's groups so that each delegate had the chance to take part in two sessions. I attended groups on Employment and the Director's role.

In the Employment group strong views were expressed that The Society's light engineering training was not worthwhile today and seemed a waste of money.

In the Director's group, we discussed the main points of his speech, especially renaming The Society. This produced mixed

views. The greatest fear was that a change of name would decrease The Society's revenue, and another fear was that a new name might seem equally inappropriate in ten years' time.

John was asked how Local Groups could serve him and The Society better. He replied that the strength of any unit is the strength of the smallest component - in this case the Group. He was disappointed that the growth of the Groups had not kept pace with other sections of The Society.

He hoped that Local Groups included cerebral palsied members and that they knew their community well enough to assess why more people in need were not coming forward to join the Groups. He hoped each group knew its local government officials, schools and polytechnics so as to build up relationships and lobby more effectively. And he hoped that Groups would let *him* know if they were unable to do something and needed national help.

After tea, Sharon Hughes, Regional Vice-Chairman and a member of the Executive Council talked about consumer involvement in the North West.

Our thanks must be expressed to the regional office and especially David Hanson, for organising yet another successful conference.

**Jacqueline Rawlinson**  
Preston and District Spastics Group

### Parents' Campaign for Integrated Education in London

### They're going into action

The Parents' Campaign for Integrated Education in London is the latest parents' group spawned by the 1981 Education Act. Its aim is "to support all parents of children with special needs in London, to get the best education possible for their child, and to work towards the ultimate integration of all children with special needs into mainstream schools."

Although the Bill backs existing statutory powers - and has therefore been criticised for "lacking teeth" - it would act as a watch dog on discrimination cases.

"The Bill will be a vehicle for making progress against discrimination and disadvantages suffered in general by disabled people, which can command the widest support," declared Lord Campbell.

Arguing for an independent Disablism Commission, Baroness Masham of Ilton quoted the concern of The Spastics Society about the lack of planning and standards apparent in "care in the community" schemes.

However the Government maintained that it would not facilitate the passage of the Bill through the House.

It took the same line on Lord Longford's Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Amendment Bill (originally introduced by Bob Wareing in the Commons) on 22 March.

Notwithstanding the implacable opposition, the Bill has now moved through Second Reading, Committee and Report stages.

At the Report stage further amendments were made to improve the definition of disability and include mental handicap.

Most of the debate focussed

on their child being labelled "handicapped" which effectively segregates the child from its family too.

A special school, she thought, takes a child away from his friends and into a cosseted environment where there are lower expectations and no normal models of behaviour. Later he has to face a harsh world.

"Is it necessary to isolate children with special needs in order to give them special attention?" she asked.

She wanted parents in the campaign to work with professionals so that children need not fit into a system but the system could be changed to fit the child.

John Fowler, Vice Chairman of ILEA's Schools Sub-Committee, welcomed the Campaign. He hoped it would help parents caught in a large bureaucratic system and that it would work with the ILEA to improve the school system.

He argued that the ILEA's policy on sexism and racism stemmed from a concern with under-achievement, which had little to do with children with special needs - a point which was promptly challenged by a parent.

Later he mentioned lack of resources to implement the Act. Mark Vaughan pointed out that lack of resources cannot be used as an excuse for not fulfilling statutory duties. There are LEAs who have re-allocated their resources.

Several short-term objectives for the campaign were suggested - submitting evidence to the Thomas Committee which has been looking into primary education in London; lobbying for a re-allocation of resources; drawing up guidelines to help parents with the new procedures; parent groups helping individual parents.

Penny Juneidi, founder of the Campaign, said that a meeting had taken place with members of the ILEA, and others were planned. Once the Campaign was formally established, it would seek funding.

"I believe that with the support of parents and professionals we are well on the way to getting started," she said.

**Mary Wilkinson**

to claim the benefit. It is the only benefit from which women are excluded on account of their marital status.

Introducing the clause, Margaret Boettke MP, Opposition Spokesman on Social Security, called it "the most serious remaining anomaly" in the social security system. It is based on the outdated assumption that women are financially dependent on their husbands. Yet the Government's own figures show this to be a lie.

She pointed out that given the cut-back in services, the Government's "care in the community" policy really means unpaid and unrecognised care by married women.

Tony Newton admitted that the clause was attracting sympathy from both sides of the Committee. He himself was not unsympathetic to the arguments. However, he could not accept the clause.

He invited the Committee to consider whether, the money being available, it would spend £60 million on ICA when there were such competing demands as the restoration of 5 per cent abatement on Invalidity Benefit, the extension of Mobility Allowance to blind people, and provision of services to carers.

**Amanda Jordan**

## MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

### 1984 Budget - the good news

Tax changes took up the bulk of the Budget this year, and some of them will be a help to disabled people.

From 1 May, VAT relief for personal ambulances will be extended to vehicles designed or adapted for carrying a handicapped person either in a wheelchair or on a stretcher, and up to five other people.

A new car tax relief for personal ambulances will also cover these vehicles.

The exemptions will apply only to cars with substantial and permanent conversions which are designed for a handicapped person. For example, cars fitted with a permanent means of loading and fixing for a wheelchair will be eligible, but not those with minor adaptations like hand controls. This means that only a small number of disabled people and their families will benefit.

Exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty will be extended to War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement to bring it into line with

### the Mobility Allowance.

The increase in tax thresholds above the rate of inflation will take 850,000 people out of the tax system including 100,000 widows and 10,000 people who have been receiving means-tested benefits and paying tax. Since the consequence of disability is sometimes part-time work and lower earning potential, some disabled people will be helped.

But many who are totally dependent on social security benefits will not be affected by the tax changes. They must wait until May for the announcement of the Retail Price Index figures and benefit upratings to judge the generosity of the Government.

### Anti-discrimination Bills - plugging on

Two Bills concerned with anti-discrimination are now working their way through the House of Lords.

The Disabled Persons' Bill, introduced by the Conservative peer, Lord Campbell of Croy, seeks to establish a Disablism Commission. It received its Committee Stage on 6 March.

The Bill backs existing statutory powers - and has therefore been criticised for "lacking teeth" - it would act as a watch dog on discrimination cases.

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At the Report stage further amendments were made to improve the definition of disability and include mental handicap.

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on a successful amendment, moved by Lord Longford, which meets criticism that discrimination does not necessarily imply an adverse distinction. Clause 1 now reads, "It is unlawful for a person to discriminate unreasonably against another person on the grounds of disability."

Lord Renton welcomed this amendment from the Government benches.

**Stop press** This Bill was defeated and thrown out at its Third Reading on 3 April by a Government majority of 19.

### Invalid Care Allowance for married women - defeated

Invalid Care Allowance for married women was defeated in the Committee of the Health and Social Security Bill on 20 March by 9 votes to 5.

Tony Newton, MP, Minister for the Disabled, gave it the thumbs down on account of cost - £60 million a year.

The new clause, supported by The Spastics Society and many other voluntary organisations, was designed to end discrimination against married women who at present are not entitled

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### Assessment services won't be axed

Plans to re-organise the medical and psychological assessment services at Fitzroy Square were accepted by the Executive Council at its meeting on 27 March.

The main recommendations in the report put forward by John Belcher, Director of Social Services, were that services should be maintained and the management improved. Educational psychologists and social workers concerned with assessment will now be accountable to the Director of Social Services. Assessment will be undertaken in the regions from time to time, and closer links will be developed with regional assessment centres. A data base will be established, and there is to be a research programme.

However, Professor Kevin Connolly, Chairman of the Educational Advisory Committee, who had been invited to the meeting, did not think the solutions went far enough. A working party composed of members of the Educational Advisory Committee and the Medical Advisory Committee had recommended that the assessment services should be abolished.

John Belcher will review the services in 18 months' time assisted by Professor Connolly and Professor Taylor and report back to the Council.

The budget for 1984/85 was approved. Although the major expenditure proposals were accepted (such as alterations at Trengweath School and a new kitchen at Princess Marina Centre), no expenditure is to be incurred until the content and source of funding have been reviewed and re-approved.

As recommended by the Directors, the 1985/6 projected budget was noted but not accepted, since it would have brought The Society's reserves below the agreed level.

**Marketing and Fund-Raising Committee.** The following members were approved: John Goldcrown (Chairman), Mrs Joyce Smith, Bill Hargreaves, John Hooper, Graham Potter and Andrew Ross.

**Social Services Committee.** Nominations are not complete.

**Communications Board.** The Council accepted the Director's proposal for a Communications Board which would pool knowledge and improve communication at Park Crescent. Public relations policy will remain the responsibility of the Chairman.

**Director's Report.** Serious structural defects have been found at Thomas Delarue School in the floor and roof of the two-storey block which was rebuilt after the fire of 1979. A report from Pell Frischmann, The Society's consulting engineers, has been sent to Bovis Construction which carried out the work. To put the defects right would, it is estimated, take 10-12 weeks and cost about £65,000.

Pell Frischmann has also reported serious subsidence in two bungalows at Craig-y-Parc School. Further investigation is going on.

The able-bodied workers at Meadow Works will receive a pay rise of 4½ per cent.

An investigation of the Neath Hill Professional Workshop is underway and should be finished by the end of April.

Social Services and the Finance Division are doing a joint exercise in budget analysis - taking a major residential centre and deciding what its expenditure needs are without reference to previous levels of expenditure. It is planned to extend this to all The Society's operations.

**Wilfred Pickles School** has been sold for £575,000. Completion is due 31 August. It is understood that the school will become flats for elderly people.

**Parliamentary candidates.** A policy statement was approved which provides contractual arrangements for employees who stand as candidates in the General or European elections.

**Cleveland Community Programme.** Approval was given to a request from the Cleveland and District Spastics Society that The Spastics Society should take over as sole sponsor and managing agent of the 50-place programme. The Society will now be sponsoring nearly 100 places under the MSC Community Programme, but not enough to be a National Managing Agency.

**Appointments.** The Council ratified the appointment of Tony Noyes as Technical Controller (he is now at work) and a Director of Education who is expected to start on 10 September.

It ratified the appointments of Mrs Thelma Greeves, Director of the Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development to the Regions Committee, and Barry Johnston to the Finance Committee.

Bill Hargreaves will represent the Council on the Joint Committee on Mobility for the Disabled.



**£14,000 from Pontins!** Pontins presented members of the Stars Organisation for Spastics with a cheque for £14,000 at White City Stadium on 15 March. The money had been raised by SOS members when they visited Pontins camps during the summer of 1983. From left to right: Geoff Love, Iris Williams, Kiki Dee, Roger Kitter, Karan David, Gary Osborne, Anita Land, Chris Beeny, Steve Emerson, Bill Ross (Pontins), Diana Beeny, Frankie Howerd, Lady Arran, Pete Murray, Peggy Cummins, June Whitfield. The presentation took place at the White City Greyhound Meeting which was organised by Roger Kitter and raised about £4,000 for SOS.

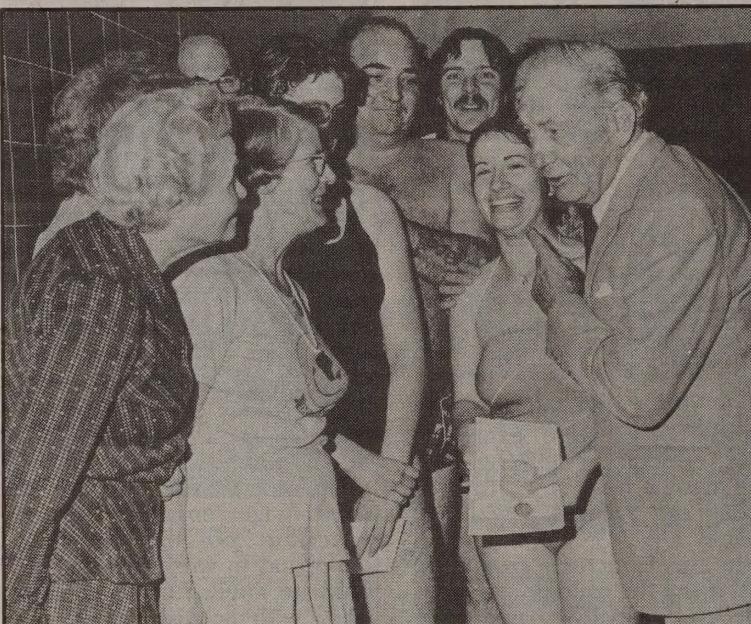
### Sarah wins the Challenge

As a child, Sarah Fuller could swim before she could walk, but it wasn't until she was 15 and attending The Society's Thomas Delarue School that she started swimming competitively. Now, at 21, Sarah has won 8 medals

getting out of the pool unaided.

Sarah, who has slight hemiplegia, has also completed the ASA bronze and silver distance awards, the Personal Survival Award, and has swum at interna-

Surrey Advertiser



**Sarah Fuller receives a life-saving award from BBC tennis commentator Dan Maskell.** She is surrounded by other members of the Leatherhead Swans and her swimming instructor.

and about 30 certificates for her swimming.

Most recently, she is the first person in the Leatherhead area to win the Amateur Swimming Association's new Challenge Award.

She achieved this in February, after swimming underwater for 15 metres, treading water for 3 minutes, swimming 17 lengths wearing pyjamas and

tional games in Denmark and Germany.

She fits in most of her practise during the lunchbreak at her job as a clerical assistant for Pimlico Police.

"I enjoy swimming tremendously. I usually fit in about 10 to 15 lengths every lunchtime. Then on Tuesday I swim another 30 lengths in the evening," Sarah said.

## Exits and entrances

### Peter Deakin

Peter Deakin, head of the Neath Hill Professional Workshop has resigned.

He has been there since it was started five years ago.

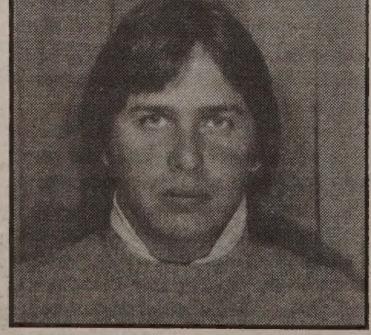
The project was originally set up to train cerebral palsied people.

Jeff Ross



ple of university calibre in computer technology.

### Stephen Williams



Stephen Williams, Sport and Recreational Officer, has resigned. He joined the Development

Department of The Society 8 years ago when it was at Portland Place. Later he moved to Fitzroy Square as a careers officer because he wanted to work with disabled people.

Since the end of 1981 he has been building up the standard of sport among disabled people and increasing the opportunities for those who are severely disabled.

He believes that leisure is important in people's lives and should not be set aside as "too difficult to deal with."

### Jean Potterton

The head of the Social Work Department, Jean Potterton, left the Society on 13 April after almost 8 years of service.

Her post is due to be expanded to include responsibility

for the Visiting Aids Centre, occupational therapy, assessments and personal services funds in addition to The Society's social work service throughout England and Wales.

### Nigel Smith

Lawrence Englesberg



Nigel Smith, 37, Senior Regional

## The Sketchley incubator

The £3,500 raised from Sketchley's National Dolly Week and presented to The Society late last year has been used to buy a transport incubator for Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton.

The new incubator is due to be installed at the hospital within two months.

"A transport incubator is designed to provide a warm environment while the baby is in an ambulance being moved from home to hospital, or from one hospital to another," explained Tim French, consultant paediatrician at Musgrove Park Hospital.

"This hospital deals with all the new-born intensive care for the whole of Somerset, so babies often need to be transported here quickly."

"We also need the incubator for taking infants to Bristol, where all the neo-natal surgery for the area is done."

The hospital previously had the use of two transport incubators. One is over ten years old and has now been condemned as unsafe, so the new incubator will be used as a replacement.

Unlike the old incubator, the new one will have a ventilator - a breathing-support system. The ventilator costs £1,000 and has been bought by the North Petherton Guy Fawkes Carnival Committee.

"The gifts will allow us to have two children being ventilated and transported at the same time," said Tim French. "That will improve the neo-natal care in Somerset quite considerably."

## John's brainwave

The Director has come up with a good idea to help those who find it hard to turn the pages of *Disability Now* - or any other newspaper.

Why not use a rubber finger cone as a page turner?

The finger cones can be bought at Rymans for 12 pence each.

## Sathi Alur resigns

Members of Action India at their meeting on 20 February heard with regret that Sathi Alur, Hon. Sec. India, was to resign.

He said it was for personal reasons and pressure of work.

Mr Alur had been Hon. Sec. for 3 years.

"We will miss his help and support at our meetings," said Leslie Gardner, Hon. Sec. UK. "But we are keeping in close touch with him."

Officer for the North West Region since 1975, will be taking up a new post this month as Regions Service Development Manager at Park Crescent.

"My role will be to give a sense of direction to the service development work being done by the regional staff and affiliated groups," he said.

"I shall be gathering together surveys of the needs of cp people across the country, so that the right kind of services can be built up in the community."

"I shall also be looking at the type of training needed for regional staff to participate in all decisions about the provision of services in their local communities."

"I see the job as an extremely exciting challenge which should lead to even better services for cp people."

# YTS - no place, no benefits, no credentials?

Linda Avery explains about the latest attempt to solve youth unemployment in Britain

Amid the plethora of Government measures to solve youth unemployment problems - Youth Opportunities Programmes (YOPs) Training Opportunities Programmes (TOPs) Young Workers Schemes (YWS) etc etc - yet another scheme has emerged which, like its predecessors, has raised considerable debate as to its advantages or disadvantages.

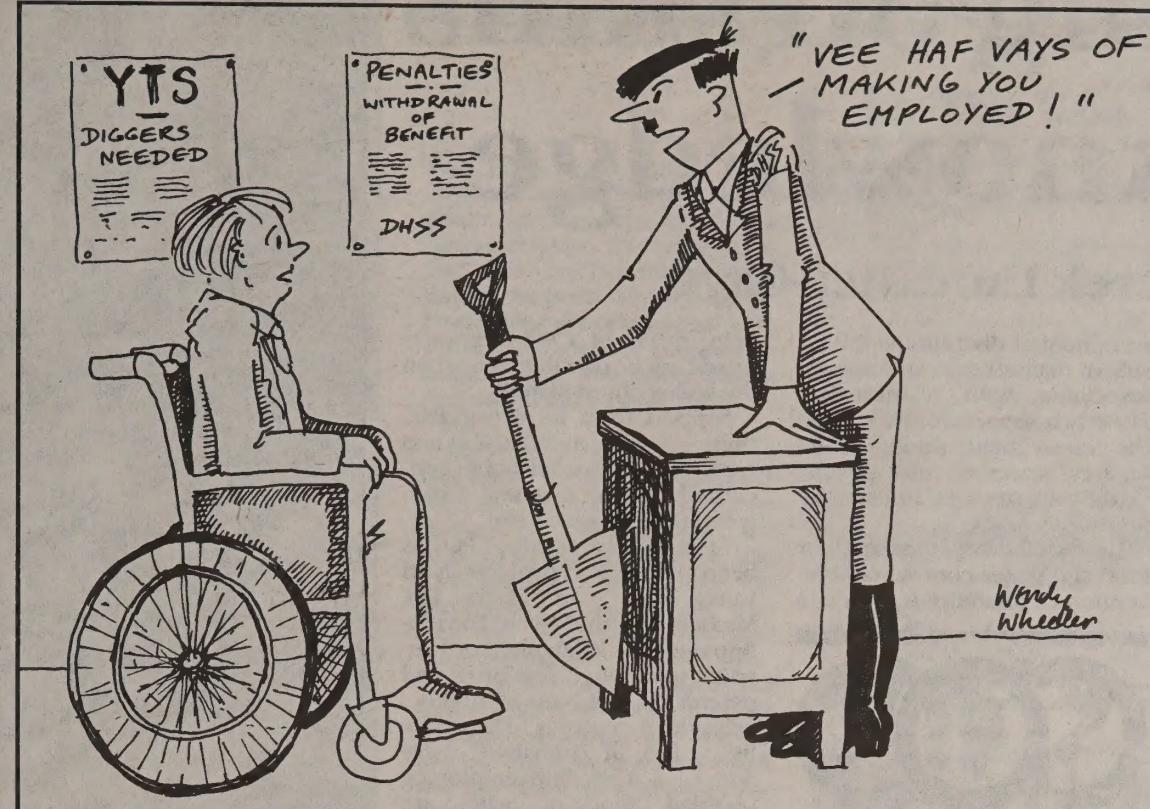
The Youth Training Scheme (YTS) started in September 1983. The aim of the scheme is to provide one year's work experience to school leavers. On paper, it is available to all 16 year olds - provided they have not been employed for more than 39 weeks.

Disabled youngsters are eligible for entry if, at the time of leaving school, they are less than 22 years old. They will remain eligible for up to one year after leaving school, provided they have not participated in more than two YTS placements totalling a period of more than 39 weeks. In certain circumstances, where it would clearly be beneficial to the youngster involved, the training period can be extended.

A YTS trainee will normally receive an allowance of £25 per week which includes £4 for fares to work. If travel costs are higher the allowance will be increased to meet the difference.

A trainee can claim Supplementary Benefit in addition to the training allowance without having to sign on for work. The allowance - and any additional travelling payment - will be classed as resources, but the actual cost of travelling to and from work will then be deducted from the resources. Whilst on a YTS programme, a disabled trainee cannot receive Non-contributory Invalidity Pension, but can still receive Attendance or Mobility Allowance.

According to the Department of Employment, by the end of last year the number of entrants to the scheme throughout Great



Britain totalled 304,309. The Government's undertaking, that all minimum age school leavers in 1983 who were without a job would have the offer of a YTS place by Christmas, was substantially met.

Those are the broad facts about the operation of the scheme. It all seems reasonable enough, so why the doubts?

First, the offer of a YTS placement. Some people think that a year's training in the work environment is invaluable to a prospective job seeker. Where a youngster is particularly lucky and is able to spend time in work which he or she initially believes to be ideal, the "real-life" experience will either confirm that belief or prove the opposite. In a placement with a large company there is then the opportunity to try out other types of work, a facility which might not be available in a normal job situation.

Yet careers officers have been

wary of the scheme - understandably so given the problems of the much maligned YOPs and TOPs courses. There is always the possibility that a youngster will be pushed into inappropriate "training" of poor quality which is really a form of cheap labour.

Also, at the end of the year, what value is there in YTS credentials? Employers argue that they need skilled, talented, reliable, self-disciplined and adaptable employees. Faced with high employee costs, employers still tend to use academic achievement as a yardstick in recruitment policies.

Second, the Government's determination to place all unemployed school leavers on the scheme, and the methods for achieving it, have come under severe criticism.

The scheme was originally set up as a voluntary system, agreed by the CBI and the TUC, and

school leavers could join and leave the scheme at will.

However, it is increasingly clear that the Government views YTS placements as "approved training". This means that for benefit purposes persistent refusals of offers by young unemployed people is considered tantamount to unreasonable refusal of an offer of work. And that carries the penalty of withdrawal of unemployment benefit, and a 6 week reduction of SB by 40 per cent.

The doubts of careers officers about YTS is underlined by the fact that in many parts of the country officers are refusing to inform the DHSS when young people persist in turning down offers. The Institute of Careers Officers has condemned the benefit sanction although of course it cannot formally support any illegal action by its members.

Despite this opposition, the

Government's White Paper, *Training for Jobs*, published in January, includes a highly contradictory paragraph which could have disturbing implications for the future.

Paragraph 26 is headed, "Participation in the (YTS) scheme is voluntary for employers and for young people and will remain so." But it goes on to say that there will be a review this year of individual entitlement of young people to SB "taking into account the extent to which they have the guarantee of a place under the scheme and therefore need not be unemployed."

This could well put unemployed school leavers in the position of having to accept an inappropriate YTS place or forfeit benefits, a choice which is hardly in keeping with the so-called voluntary nature of the scheme.

However, the Government may well find itself hoist with its own petard. In March it was announced that the number of YTS places provided by voluntary organisations are to be cut by 18,500. So there may not be enough guaranteed places (which would be contrary to the promise of a place for every school leaver who wants one).

There is another contradiction. Much was made recently of the extension of eligibility for disabled youngsters, many of whom may be low achievers. The voluntary organisations had designed schemes to help these people yet it is precisely in this area that the cuts will be made.

The Government has apparently decided to concentrate resources on employee-based schemes for the more able.

Where does all this leave the young unemployed school-leaver? The answer seems to be that if you are offered a YTS place, take it now if only to avoid benefit penalties later.

Whether you can expect to derive any benefit from the YTS experience is an open question.

## CASTLE PRIORY

### Personal values and moral dilemmas

Joyce Knowles reports on a course held at Castle Priory

last month, 30 people met together at Castle Priory to examine their attitudes to relationships, particularly those involving disabled people. They came from various backgrounds as both givers or receivers of care.

To begin with, we played games which sorted and grouped people according to different criteria, some obvious, some that needed thinking out.

By looking at the others in a group and feeling comfortable or uncomfortable ourselves, we learnt how easily assumptions are made and to question our own and other people's judgements. Feeling rejected by a

group which couldn't reject someone openly, or being clearly in the right or wrong group, made us aware of how as people we are valued in relation to others.

Questions were asked about who is in charge of an individual's life, and how values are decided. Examples of parents and staff overprotecting disabled children and adults were discussed; so were the dilemmas of making decisions and creating opportunities for taking risks, both physical and emotional.

Sexual behaviour was a universal problem.

The "testing" out of parents by teenage children provokes dilemmas in most families. Disabled adolescents and young adults find it very difficult to oppose the wishes of their parents, particularly on sexual matters. Building enough confidence to be assertive without being hurtfully aggressive also poses a problem; parents are not the only ones who have difficulty in accepting the sexuality of their sons and daughters.

These problems have been discussed many times before, but rarely the underlying values.

Who makes decisions about sexual relationships, using contraceptives, having children, were all discussed thoroughly.

We heard how a disabled lady and her husband encountered unusual difficulty before obtaining accommodation, and had been pushed almost to the point of giving up the struggle. At last, in a suitably adapted home with domestic help, they have had to accept a certain lack of privacy.

Settled as they are, the wife is still in an anomalous position: she is responsible for the home and lives independently within a stable loving relationship, yet at her day centre she can decide little for herself and takes no responsibility.

The course made people realise the importance of serious listening, of paying attention to what those with mental and physical disabilities are really saying. It is difficult to offer silent support, control the urge to give unsolicited advice and pursue an issue which makes one feel uncomfortable.

Again dilemmas were raised: establishing trust while deciding if further advice and support are needed; balancing rules or family loyalties against individual conscience.

"Sculpting" - setting people in passive poses - brought to light the various choices that exist for care staff who have to intervene. We looked at the effects on the parents and child of a recent

separation, where the child had gone away to boarding school, and how teaching and social work staff helped to establish acceptance and continuing care in the holidays.

We examined the different standards of behaviour expected from staff and disabled residents living on the same site.

We looked at the attitudes and expectations of different teams of staff in day centres and hostels, where residents were exposed to different styles of management and standards of behaviour with no opportunities for discussion.

By "sculpting" these problems three-dimensionally, we could see possibilities for change, discuss them and move towards some solutions. We found there was no "right" or "wrong" solution. The different options were closely linked to personality and the experience of those intervening or actively involved.

We looked at Maslow's theory - that meeting basic physiological needs is fundamental - and discussed how this can "blind" carers to other needs which may be more important to a disabled person. How far should these other needs be encouraged?

Someone learning to be independent, for example, may decide not take a bath or live on

peanut butter. What happens when this reaches the point where medical intervention is required though the person is happy? Should the behaviour be condemned as inadequate education, or accepted as a learning experience?

We realised that narrow assumptions about "needs" and competence can mean that the long path to physical independence in childhood is followed by a "crash" programme in social education to achieve independent living at all costs.

Trying to balance each side presents care staff with more difficulties.

It is accepted that disabled and mentally handicapped people are often devalued, but what about care workers who are "only arms and legs"?

It was decided that if children are to be educated for real maturity, parents and teachers must be aware that responsibility and moral judgement grow from many sources of experience.

Those who expected the course to provide solutions to their problems may have gone away disappointed. But most people wanted another opportunity for discussion.

We hope to hold a follow-up programme.

# Cerebral Palsy Overseas

# Handing on skills

# and knowledge

by Derek Lancaster-Gaye

Eight months ago, The Spastics Society made a major decision to become involved with severe disability in the international field and to promote the establishment of Cerebral Palsy Overseas.

Estimates put the disabled population of the developing world at around 300 million, and for most of these people few modern skills exist.

CPO was to be an agency for countries which can provide these skills and developing countries which need them. It would marshal the expertise in therapy, technology and teaching which has been developed over the last 20 years by The Spastics Society and similar organisations in Australia, the USA, Japan and Europe, and use it in the developing world.

The test now is whether CPO can make an impression on some of these problems.

In the first six months, much energy has been devoted to establishing an image, informing the international scene of its existence, and devising a pattern of work.

Invariably, lack of knowledge rather than lack of finance has been the principle obstacle to developing services for the severely disabled.

Cerebral palsy is widely recognised as being an under-recorded disability. In Viet Nam, cerebral palsy was said to be "too difficult" and so cp people are largely excluded from the



CHINA has a lot to offer in the field of employment for disabled people - full employment, good wages and a guaranteed future. But where are the severely disabled workers? Not much in evidence.

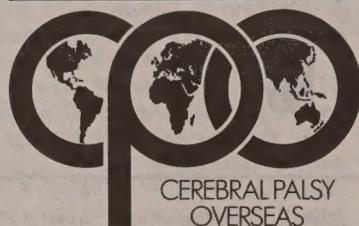
few facilities that do exist for disabled people.

Indeed, the widely held misconceptions about cp, combined with religious and cultural attitudes towards disability have quite staggering implications. In much of the developing world cp children do not go to school, do not receive treatment and cannot get jobs. Ignorance is principally to blame for this distressing state of affairs.

Of course there are other factors involved too. So much de-

velopmental disability is the result of malnutrition and disease associated with malnutrition. Poverty fosters malnutrition and the consequent disability increases poverty. And so the downward spiral of human suffering continues.

Understandably, the need for food and water comes first. Prevention of disability is seen as a



bonus from schemes designed to feed a nation rather than as an essential activity in its own right. The infant mortality rate in such countries defies belief and invariably the statistics, if there are any, are conservative.

CPO has two approaches to these problems.

First, it will work with international organisations already established in the field of "disaster" and malnutrition, such as OXFAM, supplying professional knowledge about disability prevention in this specialised field.

Second, it will undertake field training of rehabilitation staff, local professionals and parents in the fundamental management of disability, identification and treatment, education and employment. The design and local production of essential aids, furniture and toys - often by the parents themselves - will be an important part of these training exercises. Mentally handicapped people will be involved as well as those with severe physical disabilities.

Expertise for this training will come from all over the world. Many organisations are willing to provide staff for professional teams on a short-term basis, and there has been no lack of enthusiasm from professionals keen to share their skills. Architects from Italy, therapists from Australia, engineers from Germany, technologists from Sweden and the USA, already make up an impressive and encouraging list of potential team-members.

The prospect of a multi-national approach to these problems is exciting and must in the long-run benefit all of us working in this field, whatever our state of development.

Time is an essential factor if today's cp children are to become tomorrow's contributing adults - if indeed there is a tomorrow for many of them. So CPO's response to requests for help have to be positive, practical and fast.

Within a month of calls for help, CPO has had someone on the ground in Mexico, Lebanon and Syria. In each area practical cooperation is likely. In each case the calls came from parents of cp children.

Without outside financial

help, many of CPO's projects would not be possible, at least on the scale contemplated.

Support from local organisations - where they exist - and approval of the government concerned are also essential if projects are to be successful.

In its first six months, CPO has been able to plan projects in Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, China, Fiji, Mexico, Cyprus, Macau, The Philippines and Zimbabwe. All involve training professionals and parents. In Viet Nam, a child development centre is to be established too. In Zimbabwe, there will be a workshop employing disabled workers who are trained to manufacture a range of aids.

Funding for these projects is being sought all over the world. The projects in Mexico and Cyprus will be going ahead shortly thanks to funding from The British Council.

For its central organisation costs, CPO must look to the continuing generosity of The Spastics Society and to independent fund raising.

The exchange of knowledge is an essential part of CPO's activities. Recognition and encouragement for this work has recently come from the UK Department of Industry which has given a grant for a computer capable of providing the data-base for the International Information Exchange now being established in London. This will link professionals, parents, politicians and people with disabilities from some 90 nations.

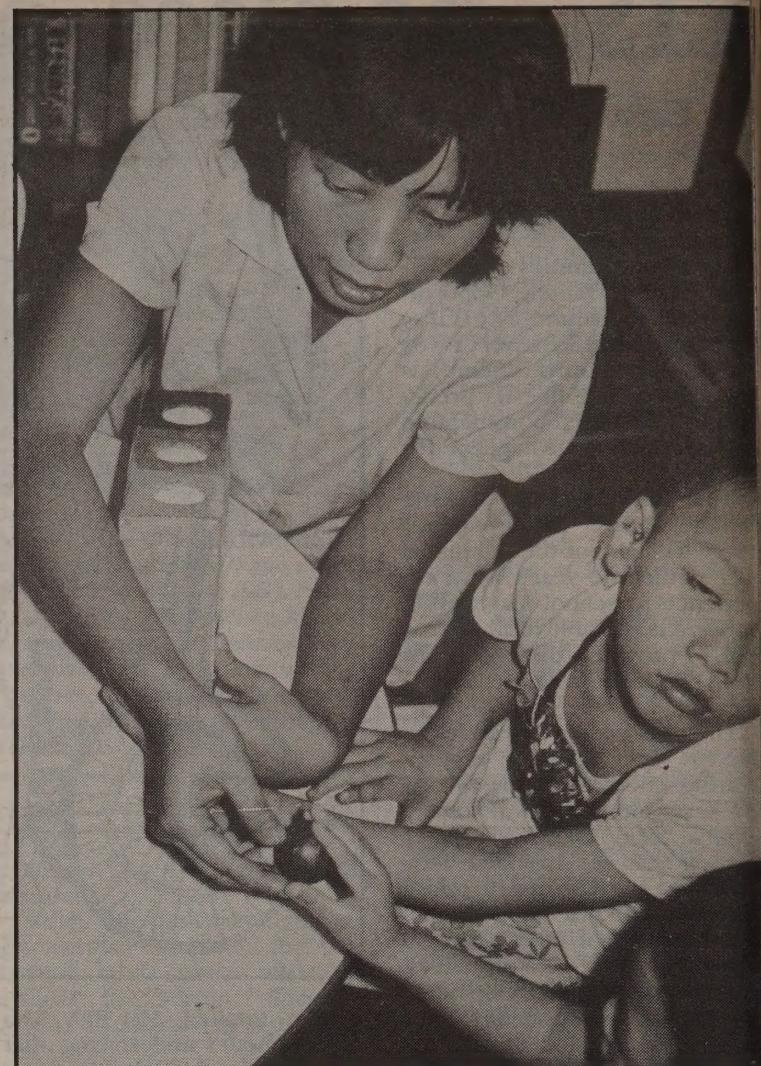
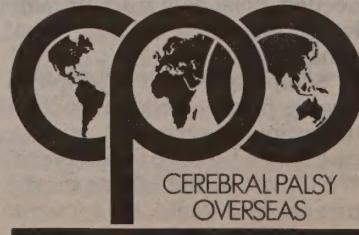
A new bi-annual journal, planned for later this year, will also spread information about severe disability.

Consultation is an important part of CPO's role. Organisations and individuals who have a contribution to make in the field will be invited to join CPO's Advisory Board, whose Chairman is Mrs Joyce Smith.

Regional consultation will go on through CPO's Board of Directors, whose members come from Australia, the Philippines, the USA, West Germany, Italy, Sweden and the UK.

CPO would also like to see disabled people making a real contribution to the plans offered to developing countries. Disabled people around the world will be involved in discussions, and the UK group will include Valerie Lang, Bill Hargreaves and Dr Ron Firman.

The future looks busy and promising. We shall be keeping readers of *Disability Now* informed of our progress, and we hope that those readers will soon include people involved in disability from many countries.



HONG KONG - A therapist helps children to learn through play at the WTS Young Children's Centre in Kowloon. The centre is run by the Hong Kong Spastics Society.

## KOREA

### first CPO exchange

The first of a series of exchanges with organisations around the world has been announced by CPO.

In June this year, 20 cp young adults and their escorts, from Beaumont College, The Society's further education centre at Lancaster, will spend two weeks in Korea as guests of The Spastics Society of Korea.

They will go to a camp in the north of the country with members of the Korean society, and then make a whirlwind tour of Seoul, the capital.

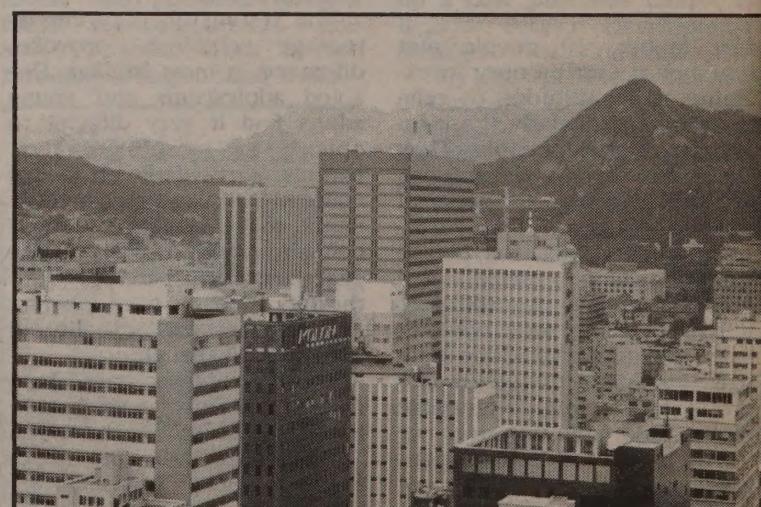
Next year, a Korean party will come to England.

The cost of the holiday is being met by The Spastics Society, the Spastics Society of Korea, The British Council and Beaumont College.

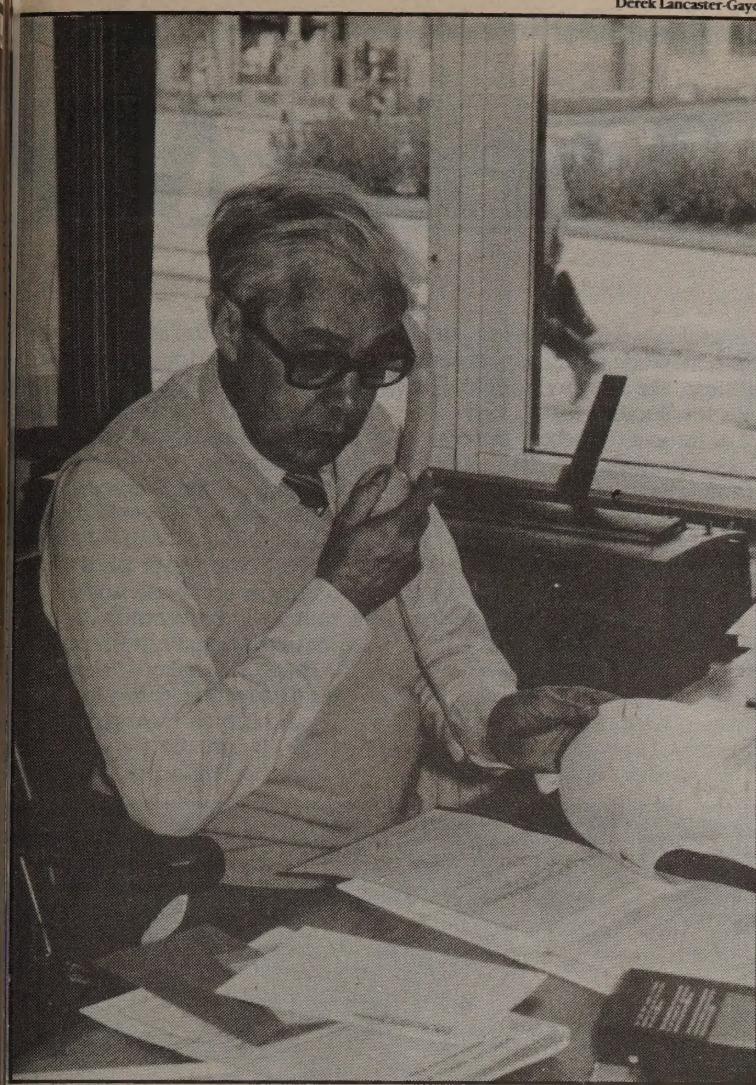
"The aim of these exchanges is to provide educational stimulus and an opportunity for disabled people and their organisations to work together," said Derek Lancaster-Gaye, director of CPO.



KOREA - Children at a camp in the north of the country.



KOREA - They claim that Seoul is the only city with a mountain in the middle of it.



Derek Lancaster-Gaye

Professor Sven Olaf Brattgard, Chairman of CPO.

## CYPRUS US \$3 million— and a CPO scheme

A project to train staff at a centre for mentally-handicapped young people in Nicosia, Cyprus, will be starting this autumn.

Demetrios Neophytou, Direc-

rather remarkable centre capable of helping about 160 mentally handicapped young people. It is all thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Steliou Ioannou whose donation was in memory of their son, Christos.

Demetrios (Takis to his friends), talks with enthusiasm about his new centre. It has 44 acres of ground overlooking the city of Nicosia, and integration of his residents is a prime aim of the Foundation.

The purpose-built centre is imaginative in concept and extensive in provision. It has units for all the therapies, a pool, a gymnasium, and single rooms for 48 residents built in family style. There is also an industrial workshop.

Perhaps the most reassuring feature of the development is the agreement of the Government of Cyprus to meet the revenue costs of US \$500,000 a year.

Now only staff training and skills are needed — and CPO is planning to provide those.



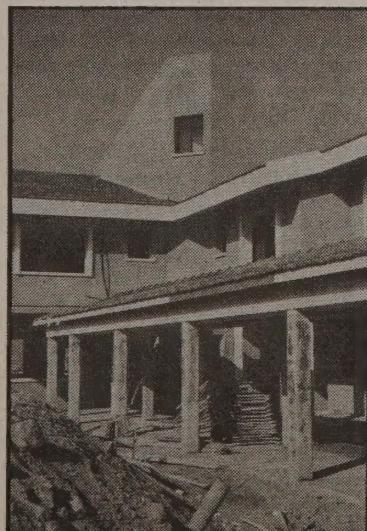
Demetrios Neophytou at the CPO offices in London.

tor of the Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation and an honorary officer of the Cyprus Society for the Protection of Spastics and Handicapped Children, was in London last month to discuss plans with Derek Lancaster-Gaye.

The project will be funded by the British Council and CPO.

Ten years ago when the Turks occupied what is now a divided Cyprus, the Archbishop Makarios III Special Vocational Centre was established in Nicosia to provide training for mentally handicapped young adults. Cash shortages and inadequate premises held up the work — until Mrs. Elli St. Ioannou came on the scene.

It all started with her casual enquiry about the centre's needs. Three years and US \$3 million later, there is a new and



The centre at Nicosia under construction.

# A new international charity is established

by Tim Yeo



Jack Blake

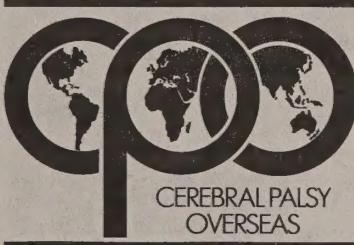
Two years ago, Cerebral Palsy Overseas was little more than a gleam in the eye of Derek Lancaster-Gaye. The rapid progress which has been made since then to the point where the organisation is fully operational with a diverse range of projects in hand, shows the commitment and enthusiasm of all those involved.

Underlying this achievement has been the full-hearted support of The Spastics Society. In many ways it has displayed the same foresight in backing a new international charity that was displayed by the parents who founded The Society more than 30 years ago.

The support of The Society has enabled CPO to attract a group of highly qualified and experienced people to its Board. Heading this group is Professor Sven Olaf Brattgard, who has asked me to contribute this piece on his behalf to *Disability Now*.

The core funding which The Society has provided has also led to valuable support from the Department of Industry in the form of a computer. This will be essential to many of CPO's activities.

The idea of CPO grew out of a series of overseas visits between 1982 and 1983 when Derek Lancaster-Gaye found inadequate and sometimes non-existent facilities for cerebral palsied adults and children in many parts of the world. It also grew from an awareness of the considerable expertise and re-



sources which exist in this country and in other developed countries.

Those of us involved with CPO regard it as a duty to ensure that this expertise is disseminated as widely as possible for the benefit of handicapped people.

But it would be arrogant for us to think that the communication will be entirely one way. There is no question that great benefits will flow back into Britain and other advanced countries from the increased contact with the rest of the world which CPO will make possible. It is this two-way aspect of the work of the new organisation which makes it such an exciting venture.

The philosophy of CPO is based on two premises: first, that the approach should be pragmatic — meeting needs of which the organisation becomes aware as quickly and sensitively as possible; second, that the resources and expertise to solve many problems in the field of handicap exist but are prevented from being properly and fully utilised by inadequate communication or plain ignorance of what is available.

The willingness of CPO staff and Board members to undertake gruelling travel schedules

Tim Yeo, Vice-Chairman of CPO.



Nigel Tuckett

Mrs Joyce Smith, Chairman of CPO's Advisory Board, talks to two directors, Derek Lancaster-Gaye, and Richard Gray from Australia, and Pham Huang Nhue, Cultural Attaché at the Viet Nam Embassy in London.

means that the organisation will have first-hand knowledge and a presence in many unlikely corners of the world. Combined with the knowledge and connections of its Board members, this gives CPO a unique capacity.

We hope that with the finan-

cial support of powerful charities like The Spastics Society, Government agencies in this country and abroad, and other international organisations, CPO will benefit many people in many countries for many years to come.

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Sidney Harris



At the reception, Prince Philip talks with, from left to right, Andrew Ross, Mrs Joyce Smith and Professor Martin Bobrow, Prince Philip Professor of Paediatric Research at Guy's Hospital.

## Prince Philip hears of new research

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh paid a visit to the Paediatric Research Unit of Guy's Hospital on 20 March to see the laboratories and attend a reception. He is Patron of the Unit and of a Trust Fund set up by the Unit of which The Spastics Society is Trustee.

The Trust is raising funds to extend the Unit's programme of research into congenital abnormalities and inherited disorders of childhood. £2 million - the figure aimed for - has now been promised.

The Paediatric Research Unit was established in 1960 with an endowment from The Society, to try and find ways of reducing the burden of childhood handicap. The Unit has always had very close ties with The Society.

At the reception, Prince Philip met Mrs Joyce Smith, John Cox, Andrew Ross and Ian Dawson-Shepherd; also a number of people who have generously supported the Unit's research trust.

Earlier, he and John Cox were shown around the laboratories by Professor Paul Polani and his successor, Professor Martin Bobrow.

Several research projects were discussed, including a major new effort to see whether the techniques of "genetic engineer-

ing" will provide insight into some causes of childhood and adult handicap, and a project which investigates the basic causes of spina bifida and related disease of the nervous system.

There is reason to believe that these conditions can be partly prevented by taking special vitamin treatments before a pregnancy begins, and the research aims to confirm this and discover precisely what the best form of

vitamin treatment may be.

Other members of the Unit are investigating the use of bone marrow transplants for treating some severe neurological diseases of children.

The Unit has a large genetic counselling centre, funded by the National Health Service, which provides clinical and laboratory genetic services to the S.E. Thames region.

**Martin Bobrow**



John Cox is introduced to Prince Philip by Dr George Huston, Dean of the hospital's Medical School, watched by Professor Martin Bobrow, centre, and Max Rendall, the Clinical Superintendent.

# Dear Mr

Michael Stopford's leaving party was a mixture of high spirits and sadness. He has been with The Spastics Society for 21½ years, 13 of them as Head of Centres.

As John Cox said, "He's a man of fun, a man of heart and a man of conscience - you don't get much better than that."

Michael was on form. The end of the Big Slim was marked by a weigh-in - on a weighing-chair - conducted by John Belcher. Michael had lost 19 lbs, but was up 3 oz after lunch. "I'm not satisfied with the training of this operator," he said.

His speech had them rolling in

the aisles.

Born in Hong Kong - "my lease is running out" - he spent another 21½ years in the army followed by a year selling chrysanthemums in Chelsea before coming to The Society.

He was interviewed by James Loring and Derek Lancaste Gaye, sitting in a pool of light feeling scared, and unable to say much. "I'm not really here," said James Loring, to put him at ease.

As an example of the problem he had to contend with, he told us about the drainage at Jacqueline Hall. Eventually he got a letter from the engineers - they were



Two colleagues, Michael and Jean Potterton, both well known in The Society, are leaving within weeks of each other.



Wynn Evans of the Education Department talks to Edward Doberty who is also retiring after 33 years with The Society. He was principal of Oakwood College of Further Education, the first college to offer further education to handicapped students of high ability.

## Just a normal

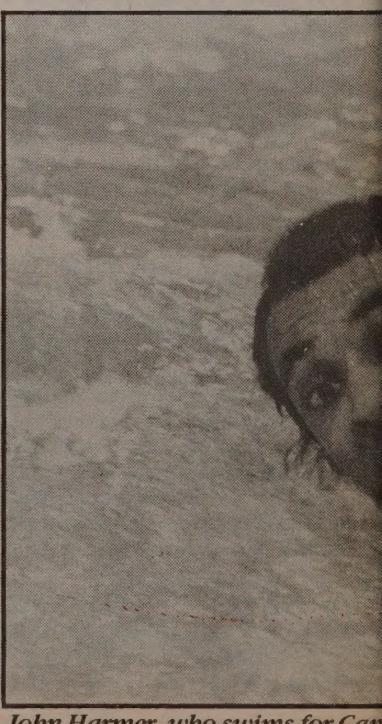
28 swimming clubs from all over the country were represented at The Spastics Society National Swimming Gala 1984. It was held on 10 March in Stoke-on-Trent and organised by Stephen Williams and the COSACCS swimming club.

"People came from as far afield as Plymouth and Newcastle just to swim in one race," said Stephen Williams. "That shows how seriously they take their sport."

All 90 swimmers had qualified in regional galas held earlier in the year.

There were 42 races which allowed for 3 different age bandings and 8 different levels of handicap from total care to minimal handicap.

Some very good times were recorded, especially by Martin Mansell and Chris Hampshire from the Panthers and Jane Stidever of Beaumont.



Martin Mansell of the Panthers was one of the swimmers to make a good time.

# Stopford . . . . .

now on friendly terms - "Dear Mr Stopford, Your effluent is now of a consistently high standard."

On staff relations, he told how he had once said to Mrs Jesse Pidgeon, Manageress of the Norwich Hostel, "I'm not such a fool as I look." "Mr Stopford, you couldn't be!" she said.

And so he went on . . .

More seriously, he thanked Tim Yeo for supporting him in his work, and also Margaret Morgan and John Belcher. The latter two had talked of early retirement - "I wanted them to say no!"



A couple of dog lovers with Sammy, who earned his biscuits.



Are Margaret Morgan and Phil Dyer trying to put the photographer off his stroke?



Putting his foot in it - as usual? But Meg Michael's wife, is not to be deflected. The cake was delicious.

## wimming gala

Nigel Tuckett

£37 from a raffle organised by the COSACCS went to swell the fund for the cp team at the International Games in June.

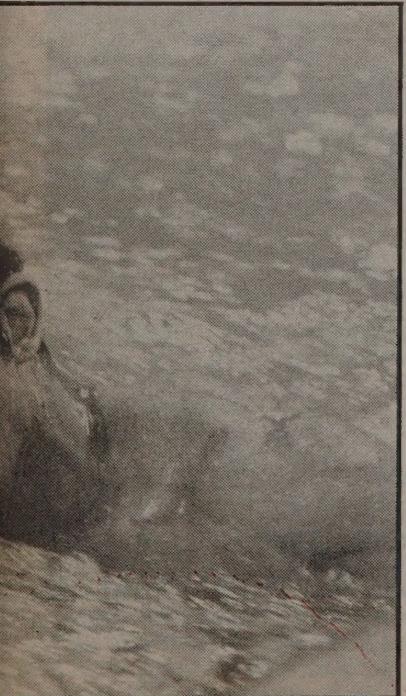
But the highlight was a cheque for £100 from Ray and Ellen Degrassa, who live at The Society's Buxton Centre. Both need total care and had not qualified for the National Gala, yet they went out of their way to undertake a sponsored swim of 15 lengths each to raise money for the fund.

Andrew Ross, Director of Marketing, was there to receive the cheque.

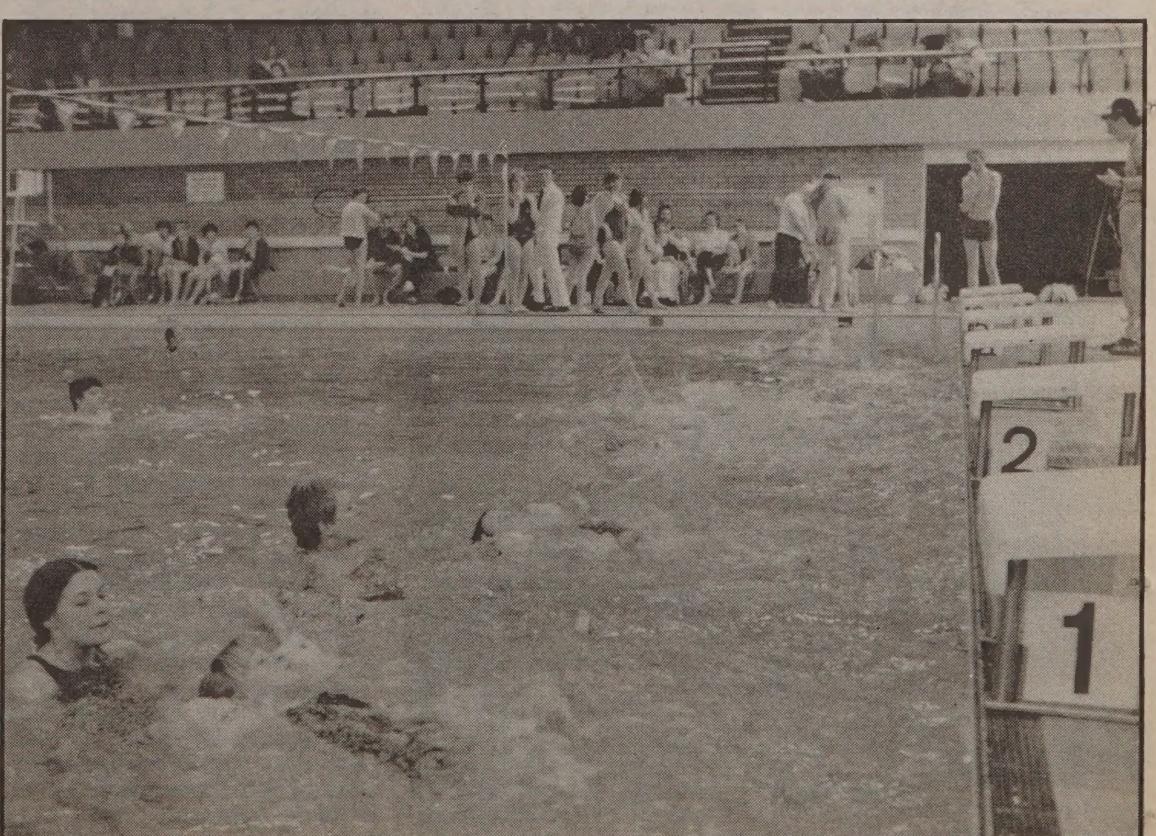
He expressed surprise that he couldn't tell this gala from one for able-bodied swimmers.

For Stephen Williams that was how it should be. "No concessions are made to the fact that the swimmers are disabled," he said.

He hopes that the galas will continue. "To a lot of people it is a vital part of their lives. It's the normality they value," he said.



Ted Cross, takes a breath.

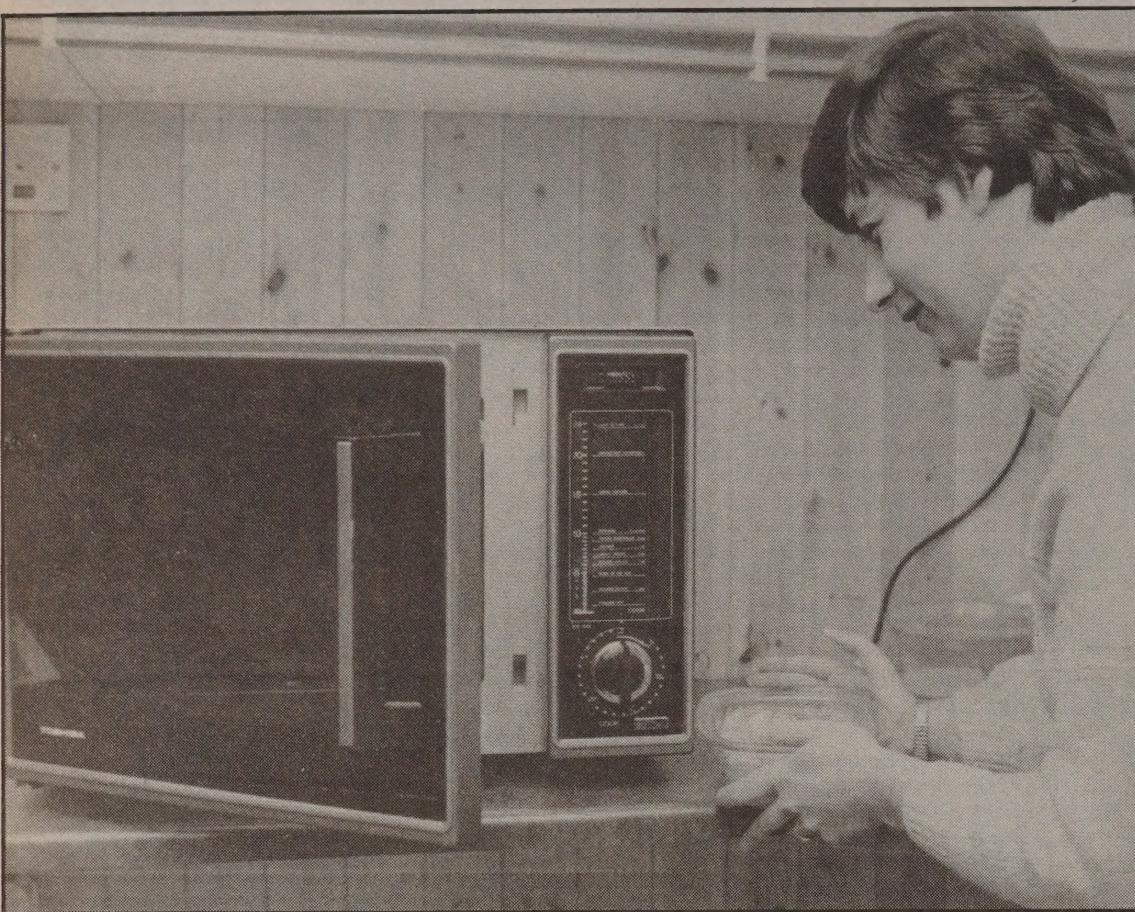


Severely handicapped children were swimming with the help of assistants.

# Coping in the Kitchen (2)

Lin Berwick talks about her favourite equipment

Jack Blake



Lin prepares stewed apples in her Toshiba microwave oven, which is marked in braille.

Last month I wrote about the need for independence and how to set about achieving it; adapting the kitchen; and finding some answers to practical problems.

A solution for the two main difficulties - cooking and handling containers of hot water - can be found in the microwave oven.

There is a great deal of suspicion surrounding the use of microwave ovens. Some people say that microwaves are a health hazard, but I read a report which said that the odds of risking your health with a microwave was about the same as an Eskimo suffering from sunstroke.

When you are in my position, it is more dangerous to use a conventional oven, and the advantages of a microwave oven are enormous.

It was the "Design for Living" team at Mary Marlborough Lodge who first suggested that I should try using one to make a hot drink.

Now I have a Toshiba, Model 562, which was given to me by the Upminster Rotary Club.

It is about the size of a portable television with a clear glass front so that you can see what is happening. A large glass turntable inside spins during cooking

so that food is cooked evenly. It has a timer, and settings for heat, cook and defrost. On the door panel is a list of basic foods and their cooking times.

If ordered direct from the distributor, the timer and settings of my model can come ready marked in braille, and a registered blind person can obtain a 15 percent discount on the price of the oven.

Toshiba is very safety conscious. There are several safety mechanisms built into the door of my model so that microwaves cannot leak out, and the oven will not operate when the door is open.

I would say that a user of a microwave oven has to completely rethink the process of cooking.

Cooking takes less than half the usual time, and because cooking is instant the cost of electricity is greatly reduced.

I couldn't have imagined how marvellous it was to see jacket potatoes and egg custard cooked in five minutes, rice pudding or stewed fruit in ten minutes, bacon and tomato in three minutes, and cold water for instant coffee or soup heated in thirty seconds.

The first meal I ever prepared

- pre-cooked meat pie, jacket potato and peas - was a thrilling moment. I may not be the world's best cook but it does mean that I will not go hungry.

For a disabled person the big asset is that the oven is completely cold so that you can take cooked food out without burning your hand. It can also be stood on a work top which is convenient.

It is good for people who have a weight problem or intestinal difficulties because it is not necessary to use fat during cooking. The utensil for cooking bacon has special ridges to drain the fat away.

The microwave equipment is light, durable and heat resistant, and what's more there is no extra washing up because many utensils are designed so that you can eat from the plate in which the food was cooked.

For me, the greatest advantage is the ability of the microwave oven to defrost quickly and safely if you forget to take the Sunday joint out of the freezer the night before, or if unexpected guests call for dinner. Also, a friend could prepare enough meals to last a disabled person for a week, freeze them, and then the disabled person could defrost and heat them when required.

I should also mention the disadvantages. Microwave ovens don't cook pastry or roast potatoes or Yorkshire pudding, because the standard models do not brown food. Meat is cooked through and does not shrink, but if you want to get a well done look you will have to pop it under the grill. Chicken can be cooked in roasting bags, provided the metal tags are removed. The more luxurious microwave models now have their own built in browning facility.

Although I have talked about using the microwave oven for making a hot drink, there's nothing to compare with real coffee.

I have found a coffee-making machine by Philips called Cafe Duo which makes enough coffee for the two cups which come with the machine.

Approximately 7 in. wide, 8 in. high and 3½ in. deep, it is very compact and sits neatly on a work top or can be mounted on the wall.

It does not need messy filter paper as it has its own filter compartment.

All you need to do is put in two spoonfuls of freshly ground coffee, fill one of the cups with cold water, pour it into the reservoir at the top of the machine and then fit on the lid. There is no risk of overspill because you have put in the exact amount of liquid required.

Then you place each cup under a nozzle and about four minutes later you have a gorgeous cup of coffee with no risk of scalding yourself.

If you have poor eyesight, you can use your fingers to feel where each nozzle comes just above a cup and put your finger into the cup to make sure it is filling correctly.

The Cafe Duo has been such a delight to me. For the first time in 34 years I have been able to make my mother and friends a cup of pure coffee.

Another product from Philips

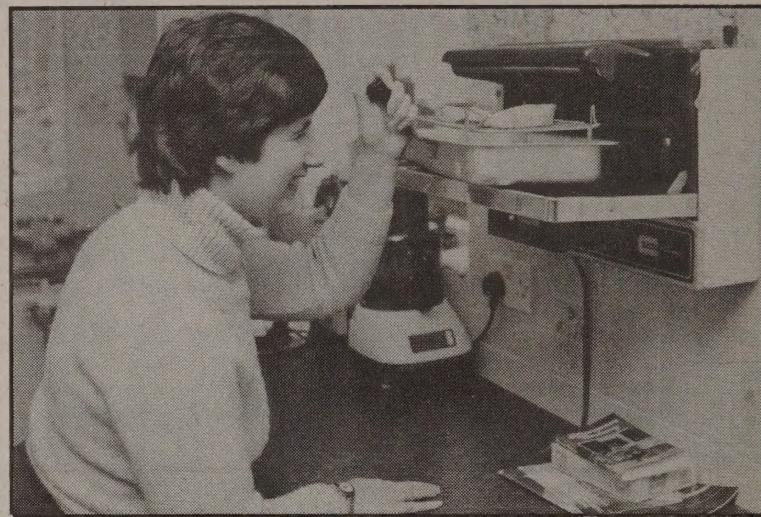


Lin's mother provides help with pouring fruit juice from the collector into a glass.

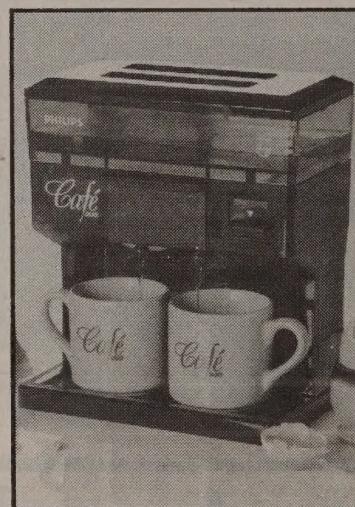
that is proving a great help is the electric juice extractor. No wrist power or physical effort is needed, just the ability to place half a lemon or orange over the centre-piece. The only tricky bit is pouring the juice from the collector into a glass.

All the parts of the juice extractor are light, plastic and easy to wash.

My newest toy is a Kenwood



A split-level grill has been moved to a convenient height in Lin's area of the kitchen.

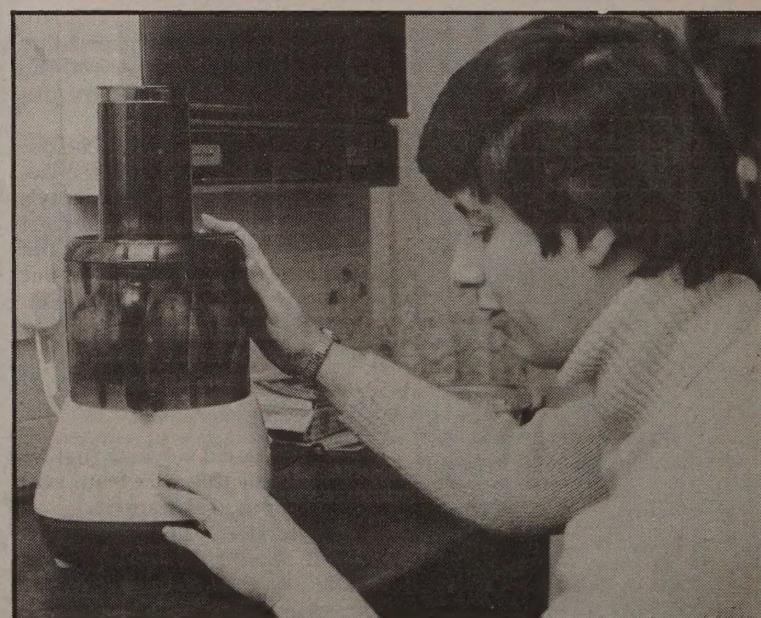


Lin finds the Cafe-Duo safe and easy to use. It is available from leading stores for about £14.95.

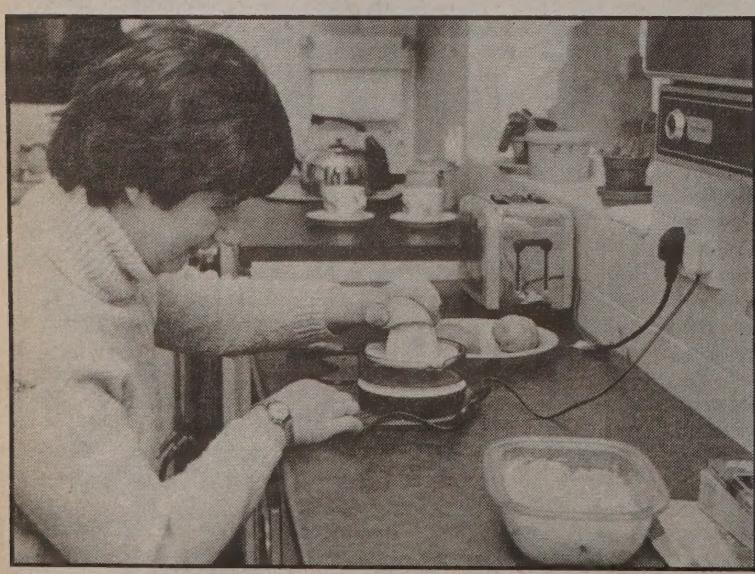
food processor. So far I haven't used it properly, but the firm base and easily assembled parts promise well.

The development of high technology kitchen equipment is of immense help to disabled people. True, it's expensive, but to me it seems a small price to pay for independence.

*The Book of Microwave Cookery*, by Sonia Allison, published by David & Charles, is useful to have in the kitchen. For sighted people, the hardback costs £5.95. It is also available in two braille volumes from The Royal National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, W.1, price 70p a volume for a registered blind person, £7 a volume for organisations.



The Kenwood Gourmet food processor can mix, blend, mash, puree, slice and chop food. It is available from Kenwood stockists for between £64.95 and £68.



Lin uses the Philips Citrus Press on a work surface that has been specially lowered for her. Available for about £8 at leading stores.

## LOCAL GROUP NEWS



Edited by Theresa Allen

### New building waits for ideas

A recreational unit for handicapped people is soon to be opened in the grounds of Ellerslie Court Holiday Home in Southport.

The building is the product of an appeal for over £40,000 launched by the Southport and District Spastics Society in Summer 1982. £21,000 came from the will of Florence Hudson, who lived in the area.

Though the new unit was planned to provide leisure facilities for local disabled people, Southport and District Group is anxious to hear from handicapped people themselves exactly how they want the building to be used.

With this in mind, the group has sent out a questionnaire to handicapped people in the Salford and West Lancashire area, asking which activities they would like to be involved in, and inviting them to make suggestions.

At a public meeting on 28 April the ideas will be discussed.

"This could prove the best thing that has happened to physically handicapped persons in the Southport area for many a long year, but first we must know what is required by the people who will use the building," said Margaret Wright, Secretary of the Southport and District Spastics Society.

"At present we have an empty building. We want to turn it into a dynamic centre of activity."

Any suggestions about the new unit should be sent to Mrs. M. Wright, Ellerslie Court, 38 Westcliffe Road, Southport. Tel: 0704 68545.

**Welwyn Garden City and District Spastics Group** has a 43 ft, 6 berth mobile home specially designed for wheelchair use. The mobile home is sited at West Sands Leisure Centre, Selsey, Sussex and is available to families with a handicapped member for £25 to £55 per week.

The kitchen has cooker, fridge and water heater, and the bathroom is fitted to accommodate those in wheelchairs. The mobile home is connected to main water, electricity and drainage. Tenants are asked to provide their own linen, but otherwise the home is fully equipped.

For more information apply to Mrs M. Green, 10 Fearnley Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts SL8 6HW. Tel: Welwyn Garden 265468. (Evenings only.)

### Dial-A-Ride takes off

A Dial-A-Ride transport service for disabled people set up by the Cleveland Spastics Society Agency is moving from strength to strength. After starting as a pilot scheme last summer, Dial-A-Ride now has 562 people on its register.

Dial-A-Ride provides door-to-door service for people from Inner Middlesbrough and the Borough of Stockton who cannot use public transport. A registration fee of £3 is charged, and each trip under 6 miles costs 45p per person. Distances over 6 miles cost 15p per mile, and the charge is divided between the number of people travelling.

Transport is available between 10am and 11pm Monday to Friday and 7.30am to 11pm at the weekends. Rides can be booked up to 6 days ahead of time.

"The fact that we have 562 people on our register after 6 months, speaks for itself," said Doug Regan, Manager of the Cleveland Spastics Society Agency. "We are really just scratching the surface of a very, very big problem."

The scheme was started after the Cleveland Spastics Society set up an agency in conjunction with the Manpower Services Commission. As part of the MSC's Community Programme, the agency could then employ long-term unemployed people on projects of benefit to the community at large.

Dial-A-Ride was one of the projects approved for the agency to set up.

### Sotheby's works for charity

A team from Sotheby's, Harrogate, came to Bingley, near Bradford on 14 March to give advice on antiques and works of art brought in for appraisal, and to accept items for sale.

The visit was in aid of Bradford and District Spastics Society.

Although Sotheby's provided the services of 5 valuers free, an entrance fee of £1 was charged for every 3 items valued. Any antiques accepted for sale were then transported to Sotheby's salerooms in Chester or London, free of charge.

"Sotheby's do 100 of these charity appraisals every year," said Ruth Green, chairman of Bradford and District Spastics Society.

"We had hoped to raise more than the £245 we actually took, but I am quite sure we will do this again in the future."

**Dorset Spastics Society** has vacancies for its new 40 ft caravan situated at Sandford Park, Holton Heath, Dorset, close to Bournemouth, Poole, Swanage and the New Forest.

Due to cancellations, the caravan is vacant for the weeks beginning 5 May, 12 May, 14 July, 4 August and 11 August.

The van is specially adapted for physically handicapped people and has a shower and colour T.V. The site offers excellent facilities, including restaurants, heated swimming pool, launderette and free membership to Sandford Park Club.

Enquiries to Mrs Stephen-son, 2 Ashling Close, Bourne-mouth BH8 9JD. Tel: 0202 514645.



Trainees and staff from the Work and Welfare Centre, Middlesbrough, and Dial-A-Ride drivers, celebrate the arrival of the new minibus. On the left are Ian Croft, Senior Regional Officer for the North East, and Val Warriner, Chairman of the Cleveland Spastics Society.

"Initially we borrowed a vehicle from the Cleveland Spastics Society and persuaded them to let us run it during its uncommitted hours," explained Doug Regan.

"Then, with the help of the South Teesside Health Authorities we bought four old surplus ambulances. Most recently, we have been given a new purpose-built vehicle from the Middlesbrough Council, paid for by an Inner City Grant."

The Agency is currently employing 30 people on the Dial-A-

Ride scheme: one traffic co-ordinator and 29 drivers. They had all been previously unemployed for long periods, and few had any experience of this kind of work.

"They are doing well, and providing a service which goes far beyond a normal transport system," Doug Regan said. "Our drivers assist all our customers from their homes and on returning look after their comfort and well-being - they check that the gas is on or off, curtains are drawn and buildings are secure."

"It takes everyone working together to make this project a continued success. That includes the staff, myself and the hard-working Agency Committee."

*The Cleveland Spastics Society Agency would be pleased to offer help and guidance to any other group interested in setting up a similar project. Contact Dial-A-Ride, Cleveland Spastics Work Centre, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland. Tel: Middlesbrough 812345.*

### Citizen of the year—Bunny Shaw



Bunny Shaw receives a silver salver from the Mayor of Eastbourne, Dennis Cullen.

Bunny Shaw, chairman of the Eastbourne and District Spastics Society has just been chosen as one of Eastbourne's two Citizens of the Year. It is the first time the city has given such an award.

"I was as pleased as punch to win," Bunny said. "I was told the two of us were finally chosen because as well as raising funds we have been very much personally involved in our work."

As well as chairman of the Eastbourne group, Bunny is chairman of the Sorrel Children's Trust, which was set up to support Sorrel Drive, a home for 24 handicapped children. Originally built by The Spastics Society, the home was later handed over to East Sussex Social

#### Services.

As chairman of the Trust, Bunny has spent the last 2½ years involved in fund-raising for a hydro-therapy pool, which was finally opened at the home in September 1983.

The pool cost £55,000, which does not include money for maintenance. Money came from a wide range of sources, including The Society, which loaned £13,000 and gave £10,000.

Because of this new pool, the area health authority has recently made Sorrel Drive a development and assessment unit. It now draws children from a wide area outside Eastbourne.

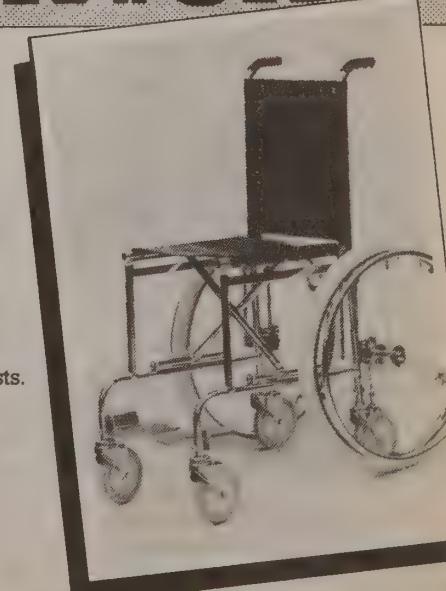
"The most exciting thing is that disabled children are now referred here by their consultants, so that a group of 21 mothers and children is able to use the pool and play area each morning, in addition to the use made by the home itself," said Bunny.

Bunny's involvement with disability goes wider still. He is founder and secretary of the Sovereign Swimming Club for the Disabled, which with 190 members is the largest disabled swimming club in the South-East. He is also chairman of Eastbourne and District Access Committee.

### STREAMLINER

FROM

# NEWTON



An ideal second wheelchair for people who like to travel in style. At only 16 inches wide the Streamliner copes well with narrow spaces on trains, aeroplanes, ships and caravans, and when its wheels are removed it weighs a mere 22lbs and folds away to only 5 inches wide. Modifications just introduced are forward brakes and swinging arm rests.

**NEWTON**  
Meadway Works  
Garrett's Green Lane  
Birmingham B33 0SQ  
Telephone 021 783 6081

**NEWTON**

SERVICES TO DISABLED PEOPLE FROM THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

#### Cashing in

Production of halfpenny pieces stopped this month, and the coins are being recalled at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, there are some 2½ billion halfpennies in circulation.

Why not launch an appeal to collect them before they disappear?

# OUTLOOK

## Theatre

### Taking drama into day centres

Jericho Theatrical Productions is a new, professional co-operative theatre company committed to taking drama to those who have restricted access to live performances – whether because of disability, inaccessible buildings, or prohibitive cost.

"We feel it is only fair that the same quality theatre should be available across all social barriers," explained one of the company, Colin Reese.

The company will try to address the problem by putting on productions flexible enough to fit into the most informal and unconventional spaces, yet with the same professionalism found in standard theatres.

JTP's launching production will be *A Lover and His Lass*, a selection of Shakespeare's scenes between men and women – each one chosen to illustrate the playwright's brilliant understanding of relationships. For 3 weeks from 23 April, this production will be playing in day centres, estate halls and arts centres across London.

"We felt it appropriate to start with Shakespeare," Colin Reese said. "After all, early actors went to where people met – great houses, village halls – and then passed the hat round."

This will be much the way JTP will be funding its first productions.

"We are not funded at all at the moment. We are going to do the work, prove a demand, and then look for funding. At the beginning we are relying on box-office fees and guarantees from those places where we are not allowed to charge but can pass the hat round."

For information about where *A Lover and His Lass* can be seen, or to book a performance, contact JTP, 182 Camelot House, 4 Salisbury Road, London N9 9TE. Tel: 01-803 0528.

## Books

### Physical Education for Handicapped Children

by Sarah George and Brian Hart (Souvenir Press, Human Horizon Series, £7.95 hardback, £4.95 paperback)

Do not be misled by the title of this book. It is by no means a complete guide to physical education for the handicapped child but more an account of developments at one special school.

The chapter on the skills circuit is interesting, but perhaps the authors should have restricted themselves to writing a pamphlet on this topic rather than endeavouring to write a sketchy account on the wider subject.

A book with this title requires a considerable amount of research on developments taking place elsewhere. The number of activities covered in any depth here is fairly small and therefore does not show the range of physical activities disabled children are – and can be – involved in.

The bibliography is short and does not provide enough reference for the interested or professional reader. The address list is unbelievably inaccurate. For a



### Gulls —a new play about disability

*Gulls*, by the Australian playwright, Robert Hewett, is a play about what it means to become speechless. It treats a heart-rending subject with realism and compassion interspersed with rare flashes of humour.

Bill was severely brain-damaged in his teens after a car crash. Now he lives in a beach house in a coastal suburb of Melbourne, Australia, where his sister, Frances, cares for him devotedly. Her ex-lover, Dan, is also involved in the story, and so is Molly, a meddlesome but kind-hearted neighbour.

Speechless though he is, Bill is still able to converse with the audience, and with the gulls from which the play takes its name. To them he can express his innermost thoughts and desires.

The gulls symbolise freedom. They are puppets which look strikingly beautiful in their grace and mobility when skilfully operated by two puppeteers.

Besides revealing Bill's frustration at being unable to communicate verbally with the other characters, the play portrays

publisher with so much experience of producing books on disability and related topics, this should have been better.

Stephen Williams

### Health for a Change – The provision of preventive health care in pregnancy and early childhood

by Sue Dowling (Child Poverty Action Group, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2B 5NH, paperback £3.95)

This book starts from two premises: that all people should have equality of access to health care and that preventive care is important.

The provision of preventive care is woefully inadequate – especially as the parents and young children most at risk from ill-health and premature death are those for whom our preventive services are least available and least used.

So far so good. Sue Dowling goes on to say that preventive care should be taken out into the community because the way in which care is offered will influence its take up.

She then presents examples of good practice and imaginative initiatives to be found among local communities and within the health services. These come

very realistically the reactions of those nearest and dearest to him who treat him as a child.

*Gulls* won a Best Play award in Australia last year. It received its British Premiere last month at the Leicester Haymarket Studio where the Bristol Express Theatre Company gave a good, well-researched production, admirably directed by Andy Jordan.

My only complaint was that severely handicapped people could not see the play because the Studio Theatre is not accessible for wheelchairs.

Ian Lewis

Leicester and District Spastics Society

#### Tour information

\*10-21 April London Shaw Theatre (Tel: 01-388 7727/1394)

24-26 April Croydon Warehouse Theatre (Tel: 01-680 4060)

\*27-28 April Basingstoke Haymarket Theatre (Tel: 0256 65566)

\*30 April-5 May Bristol New Vic Studio

Theatre Royal (Tel: 0272 24388)

\*14-19 May Peterborough Ket Theatre (Tel: 0733 52439)

\*accessible.

from a study which asked the Health Authorities and Community Health Councils in England and Wales for information on how they delivered preventive health care to all pregnant women and pre-school children.

The examples are encouraging. The schemes which show parents and even children initiating and developing projects with or without the help of professionals, contradict the notion of the passive consumer.

The study also demonstrates that preventive health care can be effectively taken to the most disadvantaged groups of people.

Sue Dowling sees the study as a search for the unusual and successful and it is here that the weakness of the book (which otherwise will be useful to planners and providers of services) becomes apparent.

It is difficult to see how the successful can become the usual without a large injection of funds and a firm Government commitment rather than the current vague recommendation of the principle of prevention.

It would be unfortunate if a well-intentioned and potentially useful book served to shift still further the onus of responsibility from ministerial policy-making to overstretched and ill-funded professionals and consumers.

Gill Parker  
Information Officer

## Holidays

### IYDP Holiday Fund – a success story

The International Year of Disabled People Holiday Fund got off to a good start this year by distributing £10,000 while keeping administrative costs to less than £100. The achievement was possible because each of the 5 trustees works from his or her home.

The fund was started in August 1981 to provide toward the cost of helpers for those disabled people who cannot go on holiday alone. It grew out of the working party on leisure and holidays created during the International Year of Disabled People.

Between its establishment and October 1983, the fund enabled 373 severely disabled people to go on holiday accompanied by a helper. More have been added to the number since then.

From the beginning, many organisations have helped the Holiday Fund.

The International Association of Tour Managers set up a scheme to collect small unwanted change from returned holiday-makers. The trustees then made arrangements for this money to be converted into sterling.

The Spastics Society initially

acted as banker for the fund and has also made a financial contribution.

The greatest help of all has been provided by Thomson Holidays. In the first 18 months Thomson donated over £25,000 in free holiday places for helpers on Thomson holidays, and cash for those who chose holidays with other companies.

Thomson also paid for the trustees to attend the ABTA convention in Majorca last year, which brought the fund to the attention of over 4,000 travel agents and tour operators. Now that the fund has become a registered charity, the trustees are appealing for grants to enable it to fulfill ever increasing demands. Already the BBC and ITB have shown interest, and the trustees are hoping the fund will soon receive some broadcast publicity.

Money is urgently needed. It costs on average £200 to finance each helper.

In addition to larger sums, the trustees would be particularly pleased if more people would collect and donate foreign change.

*Further information about the IYDP Holiday Fund can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Mrs D. J. Wright, Cottleston, 39 Cranbrook Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8PQ.*

*Foreign currency should be handed in to Thomson offices in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Leicester, London, Gatwick, Manchester and Newcastle.*

as I reversed close to an object; sometimes it did; and sometimes it bleeped when there was nothing behind the car.

However, when I spoke to Caytronics, I was assured that the detector had been tested on various types of vehicles and proved successful and that my teething troubles were probably a question of readjusting the setting and the transducer.

Mr Bouskill at Caytronics was most helpful and would be prepared to offer advice to anyone buying the device.

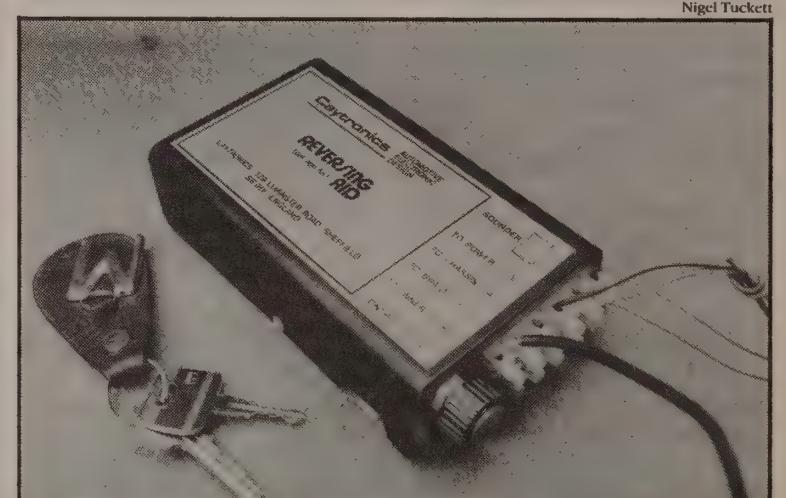
Certainly it is a good idea for disabled motorists who find dif-

Nigel Tuckett

## Motoring

### The Caytronics Reversing Aid – how useful is it?

The Caytronics Reversing Aid is a detector device aimed at warning the motorist when he or she gets dangerously close to a vehicle or object in the rear.



makes a bleeping sound, and as the car gets nearer to an object it bleeps faster.

It should be mounted where it can be easily heard, either behind the back seat of an estate-hatchback or near the rear parcel shelf of a saloon car.

Attached to the control box is a polypropylene U-shaped transducer with a screened cable leading to the rear bumper.

The device is controlled by a nob with a maximum setting of 7 feet and a minimum setting of 3 feet.

I had problems when I tested the gadget. I found it inconsistent. Sometimes it did not bleep

faculty in turning around to assess distances.

The manufacturers stress that it is an aid, and care should still be taken when reversing.

Merle Davies

John Byworth comments: The Reversing Aid does have problems. Its height from the ground is extremely critical. The single transducer is not really sufficient for the job. A Dual transducer, as offered on the de luxe version, would make the aid more reliable.

Caytronics, 128 Lyminster Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S6 1HY.

## Young Outlook

Pierre the Clown - otherwise Pierre Picton - was one of several members of Stars Organisation for Spastics who came to meet the Post Office's "Write It" train at Euston Station in February.

There he met Peter Pearse, the 13-year-old pupil from Thomas Delarue School whose poem was used by the Post Office as part of the "Write It" campaign.

Peter enjoyed the meeting so much that he wrote a poem about Pierre and sent it to him.

Pierre is, in fact, one of the vice-presidents of SOS, but he is also a protégé of the famous Coco the Clown and has worked with him in Bertram Mills Circus.

He is best known for an internationally-acclaimed act with an original 1924 Model T Ford, complete with exploding panels, gushing radiator and ejector seat.

He is also the owner of the magical car Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.

Reading Peter's poem inspired Pierre the Clown to sponsor a poetry competition for Young Outlook readers.

The poems should all be on the theme of clowns and should be sent to *Disability Now* by 10 July. Each poem should be typed or carefully handwritten and have name, age, address and school clearly marked on the back. The competition will be judged in two age-groups: 10 and under and 11 to 16.

Pierre himself will be providing the prizes.



Pierre the Clown combs Jack Howarth's hair as SOS members and children line up at Euston station for the "Write It" photocall. Peter Pearse is in the front of the picture.

## Enter Pierre's Poetry Competition!

### What Peter thought of Pierre

#### A Clown called Pierre

I know a silly clown,  
Who wears all sorts of colours.  
With his big red nose, and long black shoes,  
He stands out from all the others.

Witty remarks from him do come,  
From every point and view,  
I really can't help laughing at him,  
And if you meet him, nor will you.

So on a dull day, when you're down in the dumps,  
You won't need a playground or fair,  
For some laughter and fun, wrapped up into one,  
Just call on the clown called PIERRE!!



Pierre surrounded by friends.

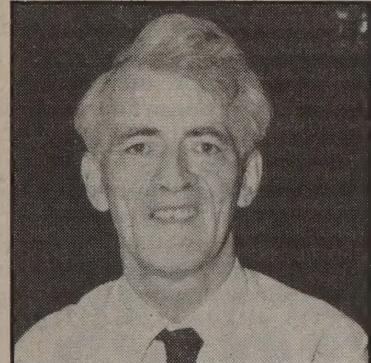
First prizewinner in each section will receive £10, and second prizewinners £5. First, second and third prizewinners will also receive a copy of the book *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* - now something of a collector's item since it is out of print. All 6 winning poems will appear in

*Disability Now* later in the year. So get writing, and encourage your friends to do the same!

Poems should be sent to Pierre's Poetry Competition, *Disability Now*, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

## VIEWPOINT

K. M. Monaghan



Larry Walters

### Life without cerebral palsy

Where does the rainbow meet the real world? This question is becoming harder to answer with each new day.

The skill of the public relations industry, which can often predict what people think before they have even begun to think, the connivance of politicians, who have mastered the art of withholding the truth without actually telling lies; and perhaps most important, the way in which everyone (except myself!) confuses myth with reality, means that for most folk life is often far from easy.

This must be especially true for the majority of people who do not have cerebral palsy. There must be many occasions when life becomes almost intolerable for them.

First, these unfortunate people usually live in a strange and dull world which worships a god called conformity. To be one of his flock, it is necessary to get others to think for you; to live in permanent fear of rocking the boat; and to become colourless

in character. Personal identity is a sin which should be avoided at all cost.

Second, life is made difficult for them because they have never been given the chance to learn the meaning of ingenuity.

All the tasks, jobs, functions - call them what you like - that they have to discharge, they accomplish in a straight-forward manner. This means that when they are confronted with an unusual problem, they lack the training and experience in resourcefulness to cope.

There is evidence to suggest that this problem has been getting worse in recent years. Perhaps people with cerebral palsy should seek ways of providing more help and guidance.

Third, it can be extremely difficult for people without cerebral palsy to distinguish themselves from those around them. All the time they are trying to think of ways in which they may be recognised as individuals. They tend to become nervous and lack sufficient courage to make use of any imagination they may have.

On the other hand, if you have cerebral palsy, being recognised is no problem. Once you are seen as not just one of the mob, then it is simply a question of using a little force to make the right impact.

Fourth, life must be extremely frustrating and painful if they have always got to think up plausible reasons for not doing the things they hate doing, or simply haven't time for.

Decorating, repairs, gardening (except for the occasional bonfire) are some of the things that I contend are quite beyond my capacity because, of course, I have cerebral palsy.

Not only do people agree with me on this, but they even feel sorry for me! So I can spend my time on far more interesting and useful things.

There is no need to learn about organisations and methods -

it is part of a biological microchip built into every person with cerebral palsy. Perhaps it's some kind of bonus!

Finally, it must be frustrating for those who have to think up ways of making their lives a challenge.

The great thing about cerebral palsy is that you are given mountains to climb. (Yes, I admit there are times when the going is extremely tough and you may

think that some of those who are trying to climb the same rope as yourself might be better swinging from another type of rope!)

A good climb, however, is always difficult. There is a need for skill, courage and a realisation that you will never reach the top without a few cuts and bruises.

But when the summit is reached, the sense of achievement is tremendous.

I have never had the oppor-

tunity to climb the rock face of Great Gable and see the rainbow from the stone basin of Napes Needle. On the other hand, I have attempted a few other precarious climbs and witnessed a number of able-bodied people changing colour on my way up.

I suppose it is one of the advantages of having cerebral palsy - a bit like the fun of Colditz.

Larry Walters

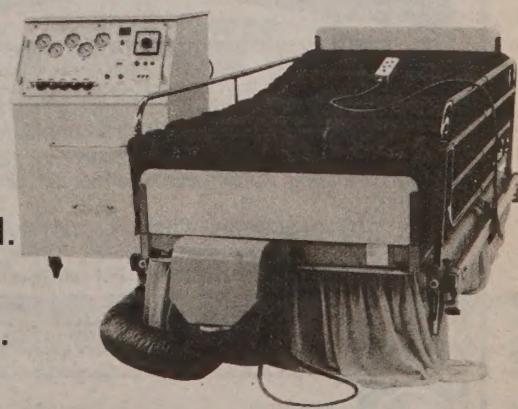
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# Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

## Locked out?

"I notice that many disabled loos are locked, presumably to avoid vandalism. Is there a universal key, and if so could you please tell me where one can be obtained?"

Thank you for raising this practical problem.

I contacted RADAR (The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) and they had the answer, as I expected they would.

RADAR's Housing/Access Department has issued a circular about the National Key Scheme and here is the relevant information.

The NKS was introduced because an increasing number of local authorities and other organisations providing public toilets felt that they had to lock their toilets either totally or for many hours to counter vandalism and reduce costs. It seems that unisex toilets designed for use by disabled people are more likely to be made unusable.

If toilets for disabled people do have to be locked, local authorities and others have been asked to join the NKS which involves fitting a standard lock to their toilets and making keys available to disabled people.

This has now been adopted by over 100 authorities throughout the country and includes seaside resorts and other places attractive to visitors. British Rail and a number of other organisations have also joined the scheme.

The scheme is not in use everywhere. However, it is hoped that an increasing number of authorities will participate in the distribution of keys to disabled people, and that they will also be widely available from such places as tourist information centres.

RADAR will supply a key if you are unable to obtain one from your local authority at a cost of £2 to cover the key and handling charges.

A list of toilets covered by the scheme is maintained by RADAR and regularly updated as more organisations join the scheme. It

is automatically sent out with each key that is ordered.

For a copy of the list, send a large stamped addressed envelope to RADAR's Housing/Access Department, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB.

## Finding the right holiday

"We are trying to find a suitable and interesting holiday for our son who has epilepsy. He is in his mid-twenties and though not physically handicapped he is brain-damaged to the extent that he needs some supervision and guidance. There seem to be plenty of exciting holidays for people with physical disabilities and for children and adults who are mentally handicapped, but we haven't found anything suitable for Adrian. He would very much enjoy a holiday abroad if the right group could be found. Have you any ideas, please?"

I have looked through the many lists and brochures that are now available for people with disabilities, and I have spoken to the British Epilepsy Association and The Spastics Society.

I am sending you copies of the lists and brochures available from The Spastics Society as they give a wide variety of contacts and addresses.

You may like to buy or borrow a copy of the comprehensive guide, *Holidays for the Physically Handicapped*, which can be obtained from W. H. Smith & Son for £1.50.

I suggest that you also contact the Chalfont Line, which runs groups holidays at home and abroad, to discuss Adrian's special needs with them. The Chalfont Line can, in special circumstances, provide a personal helper if you and Adrian do not know of anyone who would like to accompany him.

The helper would have to pay for his own holiday, though financial assistance may well be



# What's On

## Courses at Castle Priory College

**Pastoral Theology and Handicapped People** - for ordained and lay men and women involved in ministry and worship with handicapped people in institutions, parishes or schools. 8-10 May. Tuition £36, residence £36.

**Wheelchair Dancing** - an introductory course for those concerned with programmes for disabled children or adults. 11-13 May. Tuition £36, residence £36.

**Cerebral Palsied School Leavers and Young Adults** - guidelines for careers teachers, careers officers, social workers and counsellors working with physically handicapped school leavers. 14-18 May. Tuition £52, residence £72.

**Effects of Unemployment on Handicapped Families** - a course for specialist social workers from local government, or voluntary services, health visitors, teachers of special needs children etc. Issues relating to the kind of support which might be arranged for the disabled individual and any unemployed member of the family will be discussed. 22-25 May. Tuition £48, residence £54.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551.

## Conferences and Leisure

**The London Festival of Computing**: IT for people with Disabilities Week is running from 16-19 April. It will provide an opportunity to see how computer technology can be used to overcome some disadvantages faced by people with disabilities, especially in the workplace. The event will be of interest to disabled people, employers, trade union representatives and disability organisations, and will take place in Room 97, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB. For more information contact Frances Monte. Tel: 01-633 3592.

**Aids to Living '84** is an exhibition of aids for the handicapped being held at Plymouth College of Further Education from 16-19 April. The exhibition is sponsored by The Spastics Society. For more information contact N. J. Clarke, County Organiser for the West Region, Rockville House, Rockville Park, Plystock, Plymouth, Devon PL9 7DG. Tel: 0752 492161.

**Distech, Disability and Technology** is a one day conference aimed at professionals in the field of special education, as well as those who might benefit from technology, such as handicapped young people and their parents. This is the first in a series of conferences organised by The Spastics Society. It will take place at Thomas Delarue School at Tonbridge, Kent on 12 May. The conference fee for the day is £7.50, which includes lunch. Application forms from Irene Wellsbury, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

**The Children's Legal Centre and The Spastics Society** are holding another of their training days for all those concerned with the operation of the 1981 Education Act. It will take place on 15 May at Fisher House, Guildhall Place, Cambridge. Fee for the day is £5, which includes conference pack. To book, or for more information contact Felicity Evans, Centre for Studies on Integration in Education, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Tel: 01-387 9571.

**Technology and Disability - Special Help for Special People** is a day course covering a range of technical aids and equipment developed for disabled people. It will be held on 17 May at the School of Nursing, Turner Village Hospital, Colchester, Essex. Roger Jefcoate is the course director. All enquiries to Mr W. Mitchell, School of Nursing, Turner Village Hospital, Colchester CO5 5HG. Tel: 0206 852151 Ext. 233.

**Cambridge and District Spastics Society** is holding a concert on 1 June in Ely Cathedral to raise money for the adaptation of a new minibus. Aleid Schokking, Professor at the Amsterdam Conservatoire will perform "Songs for a Summer Evening" at 7.45 pm. The concert will be attended by the Duke of Westminster and Mrs Joyce Smith. Tickets are available from the Secretary, Mrs Joy Kiddie, 26 Broadmeadow, Sawston, Cambridge. Tel: 0223 832454. Adults £4, children £2.

**Horticultural Therapy** is holding another in its series of practical study days on 13 June. The subject will be gardening in raised beds. The course is designed for staff involved in gardening with disabled people. Fee for the day is £20 and includes lunch. Contact the course organiser at Horticultural Therapy Training Centre, Warwickshire College of Agriculture, Moreton Morrell, Warwickshire CV35 9BL. Tel: 0926 651288.

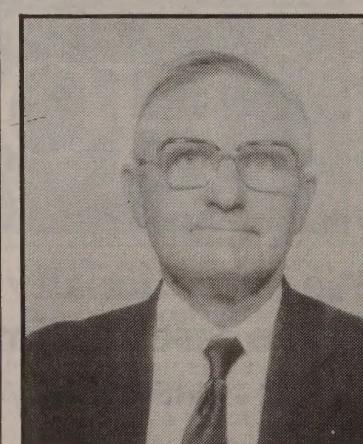
**International Cerebral Palsy Society** is organising a one-day meeting on the Primary Prevention of Cerebral Palsy within the 15th World Congress of Rehabilitation International which takes place 3-8 June. For more information contact Anita Loring, 5 Netherhall Gardens, London NW3 5RN. Tel: 01-794 9761.

**SPOD (Sexual and Personal Relations of the Disabled)** is running an extended series of one-day and weekend conferences over the spring and summer on Sexuality and Physical Disability and Sexuality and Mental Handicap. For a brochure giving specific titles and dates of courses, contact Francoise Bertrand-Tilly, SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ. Tel: 01-607 8851/2.

**Centaur Sports and Out and About** have come together to set up general sports and computer courses for physically disabled and able-bodied young people aged 9 to 15. This year the courses will be held 29 July to 4 August, 5-11 August and 12-18 August, at Newland Park, Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire. Cost will be £72.90 non-residential, and £146 residential. Accommodation will be in accessible ground-floor study bedrooms. Booking forms from Out and About, 112 Eskdale Avenue, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3BD. Tel: 0494 775377. (Enclose SAE)

**The National Autistic Society** is holding a conference on Autism: its nature, implications and consequences from 21-23 September at the University of Bath. All enquiries should be directed to Mrs P. Everard, Brick Well House, Whitwell, Ventnor, IOW 2QX. Tel: 0983 730 119.

## OBITUARY



### Joe Keys

Mr. Joe Keys, the Box Collector for West Glamorgan, died in February.

He had served The Society faithfully since 1976, and did much more than collect on our behalf from boxes: he organised raffles, helped out with door knocks and sold endless tickets for appeals officers.

He was a shining ambassador for our work in South Wales.

He will be hard to replace and we extend our sympathy to his family.

They have suggested that instead of flowers at his funeral, people might like to send a donation to The Spastics Society.

Christopher Robinson

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Literary Contest.** Closing date for The Spastics Society Literary Contest is 30 April. The Contest is open to people of any age and with any disability. Entry forms can be obtained from Nina Heycock, Chenil House, 181-183 King's Road, Chelsea, London SW3 5EB. Tel: 01-352 3046.

**Nurture - correction.** In "A case of maladministration" (March issue, page 12) we made a mistake in the address. It should read Nurture, 2 Marlow Court, Colindale Lane, London NW9 6EB. Tel: 01-200 6920.

**Under-5's With Special Needs** is a new publication written for the Advisory Centre for Education. It is a guide for parents and advisors about the 1981 Education Act and its implications for pre-school children. £2.50 including post and packing from ACE, 18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB. Tel: 01-980 4596.

**Music and Hearing Impaired People** is a new resource paper produced by the Music Advisory Service of the Disabled Living Foundation. The paper is available for 80p plus postage from the Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS. Tel: 01-602 2491.

**National Society for Epilepsy** has produced a new educational package for primary health care nurses. The material is designed to help carers understand and cope with epilepsy. It includes a

children's story book explaining epilepsy, resource articles and bibliography and a videotape giving visual experience of different types of epileptic fit. Available for purchase from Education and Information Service, National Society for Epilepsy, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, SL9 0RJ. Tel: 02407 3991.

**British Rail Southern Region's** new "Gatwick Express" service between London Victoria and Gatwick Airport is to begin on 14 May. The new trains will have extra wide carriage doors and gangways to allow easy movement of wheelchairs, and on every train a seat has been removed to make room for a wheelchair and disabled passenger. The trains will run at 15 minute intervals and take only 30 minutes to make the journey. For more information contact British Rail Southern's Press Office at Waterloo Station. Tel: 01-928 5938 ext 3722.

**CMH (The Campaign for Mentally Handicapped People)** has recently published a discussion paper on leisure opportunities for mentally handicapped people. The paper criticises many aspects of current leisure provision, highlights several barriers to providing mentally handicapped people with more integrated and varied leisure life and suggests some strategies for the future. *Leisure: A CMH Discussion Paper* by Alison Wertheimer is available from CMH Publications, 5 Kentings, Comberton, Cambs., CN3 7DT. Price £1.50 plus 35p post and packing.

**Do you need to shop at home?** S. A. Kenner Ltd., a menswear shop selling clothes in large and small sizes, as well as made to measure, is glad to make alterations and visit homes, clubs, day centres and individual disabled people. Contact S. A. Kenner Ltd., 146 High Street North, East Ham, London E6 2HT. Tel: 01-472 1078.

**Special Offer.** Spoken Arts Cassettes is selling drama, poetry, music, literature and French and Spanish language cassettes for £5.25, including VAT, post and packing. Normally the cassettes cost £6.99. For catalogue and more details send 30p in stamps to D. B. Promotions, 86 Long Lane, London EC1A 9ET. Tel: 01-726 4324.

**Perth and Kinross Access Group** has just launched a guide giving comprehensive access lists of the Perth and Kinross District. *Easy Access For All* costs £1.95 and is available from Perth and Kinross Access Group, Admin. 2 Block, Bridge of Earn Hospital, Bridge of Earn, Perth PH2 6AQ. Tel: 0738 013018. Bulk copies are available on a sale or return basis.

**Visionaid Systems**, a company which provides aids for the partially sighted, has just introduced the new Large Print Computer which allows partially sighted people to use a computer just as a fully sighted person would. At the turn of a dial the new computer produces variable-size letters on the screen. No special programme is required. For more information contact Visionaid Systems, Office Unit 6, Enterprise Workshops, Riverside Way, The Meadows, Nottingham.

**Kent Association for the Disabled** organises twice-yearly "holidays with care" for disabled people. This year the holidays will be 19-26 May and 22-29 September. The care is provided by a band of voluntary helpers, several of whom are fully trained nurses. For more information about these, and other facilities offered by the Association, contact Ann Frost, Dower House, 8 Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 4QL. Tel: 089282 4773.

**Photography for the Disabled** will be holding its annual competition/exhibition in Kingstone and London this summer, and it is open to all disabled people. Closing date for entries is 4 June. Minimum size of prints is 8" x 6", maximum 20" x 16". Slides should be 35mm. For more information about the rules, or to enter prints or slides write to The Exhibition Secretary, 190 Secrett House, Ham Close, Ham, Richmond, Surrey.

**The Scout Holiday Homes Trust**, an independent charity which provides self-catering holidays in chalets or caravans for families with a handicapped member, will open at two new sites this year. These are Low Skidlington Caravan Site, Skipsea, Humberside on 29 April and Pentewan Sands Holiday Park, near St Austell, Cornwall on 20 May. The accommodation at all sites is suitable for everyone except those who must be prone, and is available at very moderate rates from mid-April until late September. Enquiries to The Scout Holidays Homes Trust, Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JS. Tel: 01-584 7030.

**Colwall Court** is a holiday hotel for young people run by the Stars Organisation for Spastics. It has an indoor heated swimming pool, a minibus with tailgate for outings and also provides a trained team of day and night staff, backed up by a team of helpers. This summer the range of holiday activities will be extended, so why not call for more information? Single or group bookings are welcome. Contact Colwall Court, Pages Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea. Tel: 0424 211491.

**The Aidis Trust** is a charity which helps elderly and handicapped people obtain the electronic aids they need in order to live independently. For more information contact Hardwick Press and Publicity, 100-104 Upper Richmond Road, London SW15 2ST. Tel: 01-789 4055-6.

## CLASSIFIED

**PENFRIEND WANTED** for 30-year-old woman whose interests include listening to music, handicrafts and going on visits. Has own invalid car. Contact Catherine Sheridan, 19 Mersey Crescent, Manchester M20 8ZJ. Tel: 061-445 0060.

**PENFRIEND WANTED**, male if possible, for 30-year-old woman who has cp but is only slightly disabled. Hobbies include listening to music - especially Cliff Richard - watching TV and going out at weekends. Write to Susan Parrish, 222 Kings Mead, Wakefield Road, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4HE.

**SINGLE MAN** in his 30s who is slightly disabled and has own home and business seeks attractive girl who is also slightly disabled, to live in as a help/companion. Contact Ken Sykes, Dyke End Kennels, Golcar, Nr. Huddersfield, Yorks, HD7 4LA. Tel: Huddersfield 842622.

**PENFRIEND WANTED** for 20-year-old cp young man who lives at The Spastic Centre of New South Wales, Australia. Write to Tom J. Ferguson, McLeod House, The Spastic Centre of New South Wales, 189 Allambic Road, Allambic Heights, N.S.W. 2100, Australia.

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# Scholarship material

The Spastics Society is one of 18 major voluntary organisations to benefit from scholarships amounting to nearly £50,000 which have been offered by a leading management college, Ashridge in Hertfordshire.

"In our 25th anniversary year, we wanted to make some contribution to society, to help organisations which normally do not have access to the services we offer, perhaps because they are counting the pennies," said Philip Sadler, the Principal.

The Society's fundraising," she said. "Also, the opportunity to use computers enabled me to see that The Society should move into the 20th Century and use them in regions and at headquarters."

(Already a boxes and dolls computer has been installed with room to include other regional fundraising systems.)

Ann was less enthusiastic about the executive health sessions.

"I was dead after jogging", she



Ann Hithersay on the course.

"We decided that the best way to help would be to supply some places for voluntary organisations, bearing in mind that they are substantial both in numbers and resources, and are facing problems of management and technology similar to industry."

The person chosen to go from The Society was Ann Hithersay, Director of Regions.

In February she went on the four-week Management Development Programme, one of two women (both from voluntary organisations) among 29 men from banking, commerce, insurance and industry.

Women are comparatively well represented on the scholarship places. 5 out of 18, nearly 28 per cent, is a great improvement on the usual 8-9 per cent recorded at Ashridge.

"This reflects the fact that the career structure for women is better in voluntary organisations than it is in industry and commerce," said Philip Sadler.

Ann's course included marketing, finance, employee relations, "power, politics and conflict in organisations," information technology and "creative problem solving." The emphasis was on establishing and meeting individual learning objectives, and on team work.

Ann found the time spent on financial management a great help.

"I learned a lot about financial modelling which is applicable to

said, so she moved to swimming.

Some unexpected spin-offs have come from the course. Ann discovered that ten years ago Philip Sadler prepared a report for The Society, free of charge, on the problem of organisation. It is now being unearthed.

Ashridge has agreed to supply Ann with a complete list of directors of companies to whom she can turn for industrial appeals. Already she has been invited to meet the appropriate director at Inchcape.

In June, she and Nigel Smith, Senior Regional Officer for the North West, will be guest speakers at Ashridge, at a dinner for managers on the Transport Programme. This will give them the opportunity to talk about the transport needs of disabled people and to reach managers who provide and finance transport systems all over the world.

Philip Sadler is enthusiastic about the benefits of integrating voluntary organisations with industry, not only because the problems are often the same, but also because they can be different.

"Important issues can be raised by voluntary organisation managers which industrial managers don't often come up against," he said.

"It is particularly useful when we have voluntary organisation managers of the quality of Ann Hithersay."

## Big slim ends

31 March marked the end of the big slim.

The first and only person to reach his target weight was Tony Ridgley, Post and Security Officer at Park Crescent. He lost 10 pounds by 17 February.

The original slimmer, Michael Stopford, lost 19 pounds of the 2 stone he had intended. Veronica Fisher, receptionist at Park Crescent, lost 1 stone.

John Cox did less well. "I've failed totally and paid a forfeit of £50 to Fitzroy Square," he said.

Ian Dawson-Shepherd also had to offer a sacrificial donation.

## Go with Redfern

Redfern Travel, a well-known travel agency with branches in Bradford, Leeds and London is now operating a profit sharing scheme which will benefit The Spastics Society.

A donation to The Society will be made for any holiday booked through the agency, or for any air ticket, car hire, hotel or ferry bookings.

As other charities are also involved in the scheme it is important to mark your booking form with The Society's name.

Redfern Travel's head office is 1-3 Piecehall Yard, Bradford BD1 1PL. Tel: 0274 73351.

# A challenge for The Society

Two years ago Ken Smith, 32, was told he was unemployable. Now he is working from his home in Durham on a two-year Manpower Services Commission project as a computer administrative officer. The work involves designing databases to help with the administrative work of The Society's North-East Region.

"His work is very useful for any big mail-out," said Susan Smith, Ken's wife and Regional Services Officer for the North-East. "We can put a letter into the computer and then Ken makes a database which personalises every letter by inserting the individual name."

This project is part of the MSC's Community Programme, designed to create employment for the long-term unemployed and to benefit the local community.

Ken's particular post is the first of its kind in the country. He sees it as pointing the way for other voluntary organisations to become more cost-effective.

"By making the computer do the time-taking chores, it frees human resources to do the important work of looking after the people they represent."

Ken, who is severely disabled with CP, has already had experience on one MSC scheme. For two years he ran a disablement information bureau in Durham — a job which developed his interest in computers.

The MSC then sent him for

## MPs respect The Society

"Totally constructive," commented John Cox after his first meeting with representatives of the All Party Disablement Group on 6 March.

He was struck by the respect shown to The Society's delegation, which manifested itself in the opening remarks of Jack Ashley, MP, about The Society's campaigning work.

He also admired the depth of knowledge shown by the peers and MPs who were present. "The questions they asked were of a calibre which taxed us thoroughly," he said.

John Belcher talked about the cuts in grants to local government and the adverse affect this

## Disability Now

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Ken Smith with his computer equipment.

business studies training at Queen Elizabeth College, Leatheshead.

"All I did there was type, and as I could only type 4 words a minute, after 5 weeks they told me I was unemployable," Ken said. "No attempt was made to explore any other potential I might have."

Since then Ken has been unemployed for two years. Finally, he and his wife got together with Ian Croft (Senior Regional Officer for the North-East) and prepared an application for this project.

Ken has been provided with computer equipment for the job by the MSC through its Disablement Advisory Service. This service buys and then loans any special tools or equipment which a disabled person needs to obtain or keep employment. In addition, Ken has bought a small computer of his own.

"The most important thing isn't that Ken is employed," Susan said. "It is much more the implications of computer technology for those who can't work except from home. It could mean that hitherto unemployable people could be doing work in the service industries. The thing is now, how can The Society take up this challenge?"

Ken believes The Society has an important role to play in showing society at large the potential of home based technology for employment.

"We have always been fighting for disabled people. Now The Society can actually take the lead in showing how good the opportunities for home employment can be.

"It's not just stuffing dolls and crocheting, there are so many other work opportunities that my mind is boggled by them," said Ken.

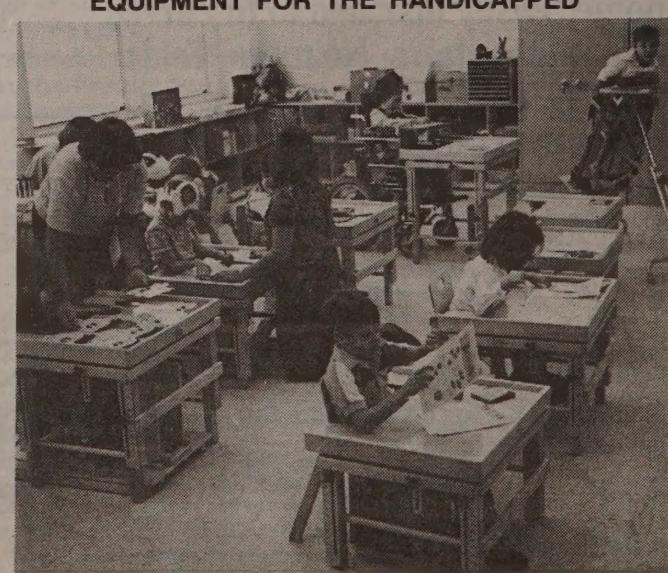
Ashley said The Society had raised issues which were important to members of both Houses and they would follow up the points raised and do all they could to help.

Over 100 interested MPs and peers received minutes of the meeting.

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Winding up the meeting, Jack

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